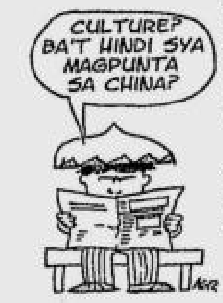
₱50-M bounty offered for Salamat, key MILF leaders

Story below Col. 1

Jinggoy seeks court okay for trip to US


CULTURE? BA'T HINDI SYA MAGPUNTA SA CHINA?

By Volt Contreras

HE COULD use a "much needed rest from the rigors of daily life."

His children could use the trip "to learn the culture of another country."

Could thdy please go

JINGGOY/ A16

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Lopez firm ordered to pay gov't $150M

By Michael Lim Ubac

STILL reeling from the Supreme Court's final ruling ordering Manila Electric Co. to refund its customers excess charges estimated at more than P28 billion, the Lopez business empire received more bad news yesterday: It was ordered to pay the government a total of $150 million (about P7.5 billion).

LOPEZ/ A16

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Tuesday, May 6, 2003 ★★ 48 pages / 4 sections / vol. 18 / no. 147 P15
website: www.inq7.net

Ruling 'fatally flawed,' says Piatco lawyer

By Christian V. Esguerra and Abigail L. Ho

PIATCO chief legal counsel Frank Chavez described the Supreme Court decision as "fatally flawed," saying he would request for another presentation of oral arguments to deny the company's competitors the "pleasure of a legalized highway robbery."

But the government described the decision as a "vindication."

"We feel the high tribunal has not fully appreciated the documents and (pieces of) evidence we presented while over-appreciating the oppositors' stand," Chavez said.

He noted the Supreme Court's ruling that Paircargo Consortium, Piatco's

RULING/ A16

NINOY AQUINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

THE NEW Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 appears all set "to fly" but legal problems are keeping the ill-fated venture on the ground. ROGER MARGALLO

SC voids Naia 3 contract

Raid perils gov't-MILF peace talks

By Edwin Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Are this weekend's exploratory peace talks still on?

Yes, if one asks the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Gazzali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said the separatist group's raid on Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, would not stop it from sending its negotiators to the second round of talks on May 9.

Not sure, if one asks Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Eduardo Ermita. "Well, I don't know if this will push through because of what happened," Ermita said yesterday.

It shouldn't, if one asks Rep. Prospero

RAID/ A14

IN THE MIDDLE. The President—here visiting the provincial capitol in San Fernando, Pampanga—was front and center of several major controversies yesterday. Here, she makes a pitch for cleaner surroundings to fight the SARS virus. EDWIN BACASMAS

Ruling paves way for gov't takeover of new terminal

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SUPREME Court yesterday declared null and void all five contracts awarded to the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. for the construction of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 3.

The Supreme Court said all the Piatco contracts were contrary to public policy and violative of the build-operate-transfer (BOT) law. Under the rules, Piatco has 15 days to appeal the decision.

Because of the violations, the government could opt to take over the operation of the project, the Supreme Court said.

"Piatco cannot, by mere contractual stipulation, contravene the constitutional provision on temporary government takeover and obligate the government to pay 'reasonable cost for the use of the terminal and or terminal complex,'" the tribunal said.

Piatco is a consortium led by the Cheng family and the German firm Fraport AG, which has written off its investment of $312 million (about P17 billion) in the project.

The decision gave legal backing to President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision in November to scrap the deal between the government and Piatco, saying the

SUPREME/ A16

₱50-M bounty for Salamat, key MILF leaders

By Dona Pazzibugan *in Manila*
and Lullie A. Micabalo
PDI Mindanao Bureau

THE GOVERNMENT late yesterday offered a P50-million reward for information leading to the arrest of key MILF leaders, including founder Salamat Hashim, a day after the Moro Islamic Liberation Front attacked Siocon town in Zamboanga del Norte.

"The government has decided to take punitive action against the perpetrators of the Siocon terrorist attack and the Maigo attack in Lanao del Norte," Presidential Adviser for Mindanao Jesus Dureza said at a news briefing.

The rebels also attacked Maigo town last week, causing a two-week postponement of the annual national games.

In Zamboanga del Norte, hundreds of troops backed by military helicopters continued to conduct pursuit operations—but the rebels stepped up their hostage-taking, using the victims as "human shields."

At least 66 hostages had been released or had made their escape, but witnesses said as many as 60 hostages remained in captivity.

The Armed Forces yesterday also updated Sunday's casualty toll, raising the number of dead to 27 and the number of wounded to 24.

In Malacañang, Dureza said the government was offering a P5-million reward each for Salamat, vice chairs Al Haj Murad and Gazzali Jaafar, lawyer Ali Mimbancaf, and spokesperson Eid Kabalu. The rest of the reward money is offered for information leading to the arrest of the "perpetrators" of the Siocon and Maigo attacks.

Dureza, the government's chief peace negotiator, said the bounty was decided by members of the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security, which met last night in Malacañang.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the President ordered "punitive action" against the MILF. He said this

P50-M BOUNTY/ A14

SARS virus can survive outside body for days

GENEVA—One need not get into direct contact with a person with SARS to get infected. New research shows the deadly virus can survive for hours on common surfaces, such as tables or doorknobs, and infect a person who touches the contaminated area and then touches his/her own nose, mouth or eyes.

The good news is that standard disinfectants, like chlorine bleach, can kill the virus causing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in just five minutes.

The research, published by the Geneva-based World Health Organization, suggests that the virus is more resilient than first thought and can survive outside the human body.

The Washington Post reported that WHO doctors found the virus could live on plastic surfaces for 24 hours, although the international health agency did not post this on its website.

SARS VIRUS/ A14

DOUBLE TAKE. The face of a sales clerk is reflected in a glass door at the entrance to a department store in Taipei. REUTERS

Sino villagers riot, beat up gov't officials

BEIJING—Furious over local government SARS policies, Chinese villagers beat up officials, broke windows and smashed office furniture in China's eastern Zhejiang province, witnesses and officials said Monday.

The demonstration in the town of Xiande was one of the most violent since SARS began hitting Asia and raising fears that governments aren't properly battling the mysterious virus.

So far, SARS has killed 463 people worldwide and has infected 6,300 others.

China reported nine new SARS deaths on Monday, three in Beijing, raising the mainland's total to 206. Officials added 160 new cases, bringing the national total to 4,280.

In Xiande, several thousand villagers

SINO/ A14

"TINIKLING JOE." US Army medic Sgt. Michael Childress tries out the "tinikling," a traditional Filipino bamboo dance, during a break in emergency response training at the V. Luna Memorial Hospital in Quezon City. AP

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao including Palawan will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly clouy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/06/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Assembly a matter of time–Angara

Cha-cha mode said to be gaining in Senate; congressmen rap Joker

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Carlito Pablo

IT IS only a matter of time before Congress convenes itself into a constituent assembly to carry out amendments to the 1987 Constitution, after Senate and House members met for the second time on the issue yesterday.

After the meeting, Sen. Edgardo Angara, chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, described the trend in the Senate as a "slow but sure development into a constituent assembly."

Angara said his "rough estimate" was that the two chambers would be able to convene an assembly to work on the amendments by "mid-August or early September."

He said the Senate could deliberate on the assembly resolution during what remains of this session which ends on June 5, and move toward approval when sessions resume in July.

The House has already approved a constituent assembly resolution which is now awaiting the Senate's concurrence.

Angara said his committee would vote on Monday whether to recommend a constituent assembly or a constitutional convention to amend the 1987 Constitution.

He said the chances that senators would go for an assembly were "50-50," he but believes the assembly mode would prevail.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., the main proponent for Charter change, said, "We're now moving closer and closer toward the magic number of 12" in the upper chamber. He said a nationwide plebiscite could be held in December or January, assuming the assembly is convened in July or August.

De Venecia's optimism was encouraged at the attendance in yesterday's meeting of Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda, who is a known opponent of Charter change.

House officials said earlier that 10 senators were already in favor of a constituent assembly, two votes short of the majority of 12 needed to approve the resolution.

De Venecia said Legarda stated that she now has an "open mind" on Charter change, but Legarda told reporters she attended the meeting "not to commit but to listen."

The 10 senators said to be in favor of a constituent assembly are Angara, Robert Barbers, Manuel Villar, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Vicente Sotto III, Robert Jaworski, Ramon Revilla, Teresa Oreta, Rodolfo Biazon and John Osmeña.

De Venecia reiterated that Charter change would not mean the cancellation of the 2004 presidential election as a President and members of parliament from whom a Prime Minister would be chosen would still be elected.

Reacting to Sen. Joker Arroyo's charge the other day that House Resolution No. 16 calling for a constituent assembly was approved without a quorum, De Venecia said Arroyo was probably fed the wrong information as the journal of the House showed that 147 House members responded to the roll call shortly before the chamber voted on the resolution.

"If there was no quorum, there would have been a big holler and protest from the opposition," he said.

House Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II told Arroyo to "stop meddling in the affairs of the House," while Representatives Prospero Nograles and Willie Villarama deplored Arroyo's allegedly setting aside "inter-parliamentary courtesy" when he questioned a House bill.

Yesterday, Arroyo was back in attack mode, calling the constituent assembly resolution "very dangerous" as it was open-ended and could pave the way for the cancellation of the 2004 elections.

He warned that the constituent assembly could "effectively introduce any and all kinds of amendments," such as one to extend the term of incumbents and postpone the 2004 polls in order to provide for an "orderly transition from the old to the new form of government."

He contended that the House roll call on March 19 showing 147 members present was made between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. while the voting on the resolution occurred at midnight.

In Malacañang, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo was not opposing Charter change because "she herself proposed some amendments to the Constitution" while still a senator.

"That's why she could not in all honesty really oppose any initiative to amend the Constitution," Bunye said at his regular press briefing, largely in answer to accusations that Malacañang was behind the moves to rewrite the Charter, ostensibly to extend Ms Macapagal's term to 2007.

Bunye said Ms Macapagal would simply allow the House and Senate to agree on when and how to amend the Charter. *With reports from Agnes E. Donato and Christine Avendaño, Metro Manila, and Kathy I. Navarro, PDI Visayas Bureau*

DFA: Only 2 US properties for sale

THE FOREIGN affairs department yesterday said the government plans to sell only its properties in Houston, Texas and Seattle, Washington, but senators urged the deferment of any sale of Philippine properties abroad.

"We want (the executive branch) to suspend any negotiations on the sale or the disposition of these properties until the issues can be clarified," Sen. Franklin Drilon told reporters after a hearing yesterday by the Senate foreign relations committee.

Among the issues that the Senate wants the Department of Foreign Affairs to clarify are the nature of the properties concerned and whether these are in the public domain, Drilon said.

Public domain means property which is owned by the public in general and destined for public use or which belongs exclusively to the State and whose ownership cannot be transferred to anyone.

DFA Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin said at the hearing that the DFA was only proposing the sale of the Seattle and Houston properties. The Houston property is the consulate residence while the Seattle one is a vacant lot.

DFA officials also told the hearing the department was authorized by the 2003 General Appropriations Act to dispose of government properties and buy new ones abroad.

This was a surprise to Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the foreign relations and finance committees. The latter oversaw the deliberations on and passage of the 2003 national budget.

Villar told reporters there was apparently a "rider" in the budget authorizing the DFA to buy and sell properties abroad. *Christine Avendaño*

ERRATUM

In the Adamson University College of Law ad which appeared in the May 4 issue of PDI (P. A6), the phrase *"A SELECTIVE RETENTION POLICY because we believe that every students has to prove his worth as a future topnotch lawyer"* should appear as *"A SELECTIVE RETENTION POLICY because we believe that every student has to prove his worth as a future topnotch lawyer."*

We regret the error.

Firepower demo to end Balikatan

FORT MAGSAYSAY, Nueva Ecija—United States and Filipino troops participating in the Balikatan 03 exercises will demonstrate their firepower today to mark the close of the 14-day war exercises here.

Using live munitions, the 948 US and Filipino soldiers will show how an infantry platoon is supported during an attack on a designated target.

They will demonstrate the use of various weapons in activities ranging from artillery firing to attack aircraft and to sniper firing in support of the maneuvers of combat troops.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone will lead guests in the culminating activity at Fernandez Hill here.

Included in 14-day training events were tactics, techniques and procedures in joint infantry operations, military operations in urban terrain, and artillery and combat-engineering operations. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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RP trims humanitarian mission to Iraq to affordable level

By Dona Pazzibugan and Martin P. Marfil

DUE to budget constraints, the country will cut the number of its humanitarian force members to Iraq from 500 to 175. The mission's original budget of $600 million will also be slashed to $179 million.

The smaller contingent would be composed mainly of medical workers. The others would be military and police personnel, according to presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

"We'll still be making our presence felt but we're down-scaling our participation to the extent that is financially feasible," said Bunye at a news briefing yesterday.

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo has approved the plan to down-scale the mission. A consensus was reached to cut the numbers after consultations with members of Congress, he said.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, co-chairs of the humanitarian and peacekeeping task force, had met with the lawmakers last week.

Ms Macapagal pledged to send a team of medical workers and security personnel to Iraq shortly after President Saddam Hussein's regime was toppled by US-led coalition forces last month.

As part of the "coalition of the willing," the Philippines had supported the US-led war even though it did not lacked a United Nations mandate.

Ms Macapagal had said the country was extending assistance to war-devastated Iraq out of "goodwill, friendship and strategic diplomacy."

Reyes said the downsized contingent will be composed of 60 employees from the Department of Health, 49 from the Department of Social Welfare and Development, one from the Department of Foreign Affairs, 50 from the Armed Forces of the Philippines and 25 policemen.

He said officials were looking into the possibility of replacing the security forces with engineers.

Asked why the government was still looking to spend P179 million for the contingent when there were more pressing problems at home, like the war in Mindanao, Reyes said the government had a "legal basis" for sending the humanitarian force.

He cited UN Security Council Resolution No. 1472, which mandates member-countries to render humanitarian assistance to Iraq, and the Geneva Convention.

"The 4th Geneva Convention of 1949 says occupation forces should take care of the citizens of the occupied territories and render them military assistance, so these are international covenants..." Reyes said.

He said there was another reason for sending the contingent: "The reality of international politics is that we will not have gain without fame. We won't have revenues without cost."

The members of the mission, however, will likely have to make do with an allowance much lower than $50 a day proposed earlier by the government.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said yesterday the government was considering further reducing the proposed $1,000 monthly allowance for each peacekeeper (roughly $33.33 a day) due to budgetary constraints.

"Initially, the group that will go to Iraq was to get an allowance of $1,000 a month. I think this has been reduced because the government can't afford it," Boncodin said. She did not say how much the reduction was. *With TJ Burgonio and Norman Bordadora*

BIOGESIC
FEVERWATCH

FEVER MANAGEMENT IN THE TIME OF PNEUMONIA

What Is Pneumonia?
Pneumonia is a disease that occurs when the lungs get inflamed, usually due to infection. It's a more common problem than most people think. Usually it's a mild disease, but some forms are very dangerous and require a consultation with a doctor. An example is the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS, whose cause and cure have yet to be discovered. About 30 different kinds of germs infect the lungs and cause pneumonia. Infected lungs leak fluids and shed dead cells. This material clogs up air sacs and makes it hard for the lungs to do their job of getting oxygen into the blood. Without enough oxygen, none of the cells in your body work as they should.
Pneumonia can affect just one section of the lung or many sections of the lung. When both lungs are affected, it's called double pneumonia. Pneumonia generally lasts about two weeks. But it may take a month or more for the infected lung or lungs to clear up. Thus, when recovering from pneumonia, even healthy people may feel tired or weak.

"Fever as a symptom of pneumonia should always be managed at the onset"

Causes
Viruses cause about half of all cases of pneumonia. Bacteria are the most common cause of pneumonia in adults over the age of 30. Fungi can also cause pneumonia. Many of these germs are all around us. They usually can't get past a healthy person's natural defenses. That's why pneumonia is most common in elderly people, in cigarette smokers, in alcoholics, and in people suffering from other diseases such as the flu.

Symptoms
- Viral pneumonia usually comes with a combination of low fever and chills, muscle aches, fatigue, enlarged lymph nodes in the neck, chest pain, sore throat, and coughing. The cough generally brings up only a small amount of mucus.
- Bacterial pneumonia usually comes with a combination of high fever, cough with thick greenish or rust-colored mucus, shortness of breath, rapid breathing, sharp chest pain that is worse with deep breaths, abdominal pain, and severe fatigue. There can be profuse sweating and mental confusion.
- In children, labored and rapid breathing (more than 45 breaths a minute); sudden onset of fever; cough; wheezing; and bluish skin, lips, or fingertips are general signs of pneumonia.
- Mycoplasma pneumonia is often very benign and resolves without any treatment. Symptoms can consist of violent attacks of coughing that bring up only a small amount of mucus. There are chills and fever; some people get nausea or vomiting. Some patients become very weak for up to a month.

Fever as a symptom and why it should be managed at the onset

Fever is a common symptom among the kinds of pneumonia. That's because fever is, by itself, the body's warning signal that there is an infection. It is very important that fever not be ignored so that a disease, whether pneumonia or not, can be detected and further complications be avoided. In the case of pneumonia, the best thing to do is to manage your fever at the first sign.

Managing Fever at the Onset
Whether it's mild or high, you should take Paracetamol like Biogesic to help alleviate your suffering from fever. Drink plenty of fluids and avoid physical and mental stress. It is also advisable to dress in light clothing so that you feel comfortable and your temperature can stabilize. After managing your fever, this does not mean that the rest of the symptoms should be taken lightly.

When to consult a doctor
- Your symptoms indicate you have any form of pneumonia. In many instances, you need immediate treatment to recover and avoid complications.
- Your sharp chest pain does not get better with prescribed treatment; you have increased shortness of breath; or your fingernails, toenails, or skin becomes dark or develop a bluish tinge after diagnosis. Your lungs are not getting enough oxygen and you need medical assistance.
- You cough up blood; you may need additional treatment for a worsening infection.

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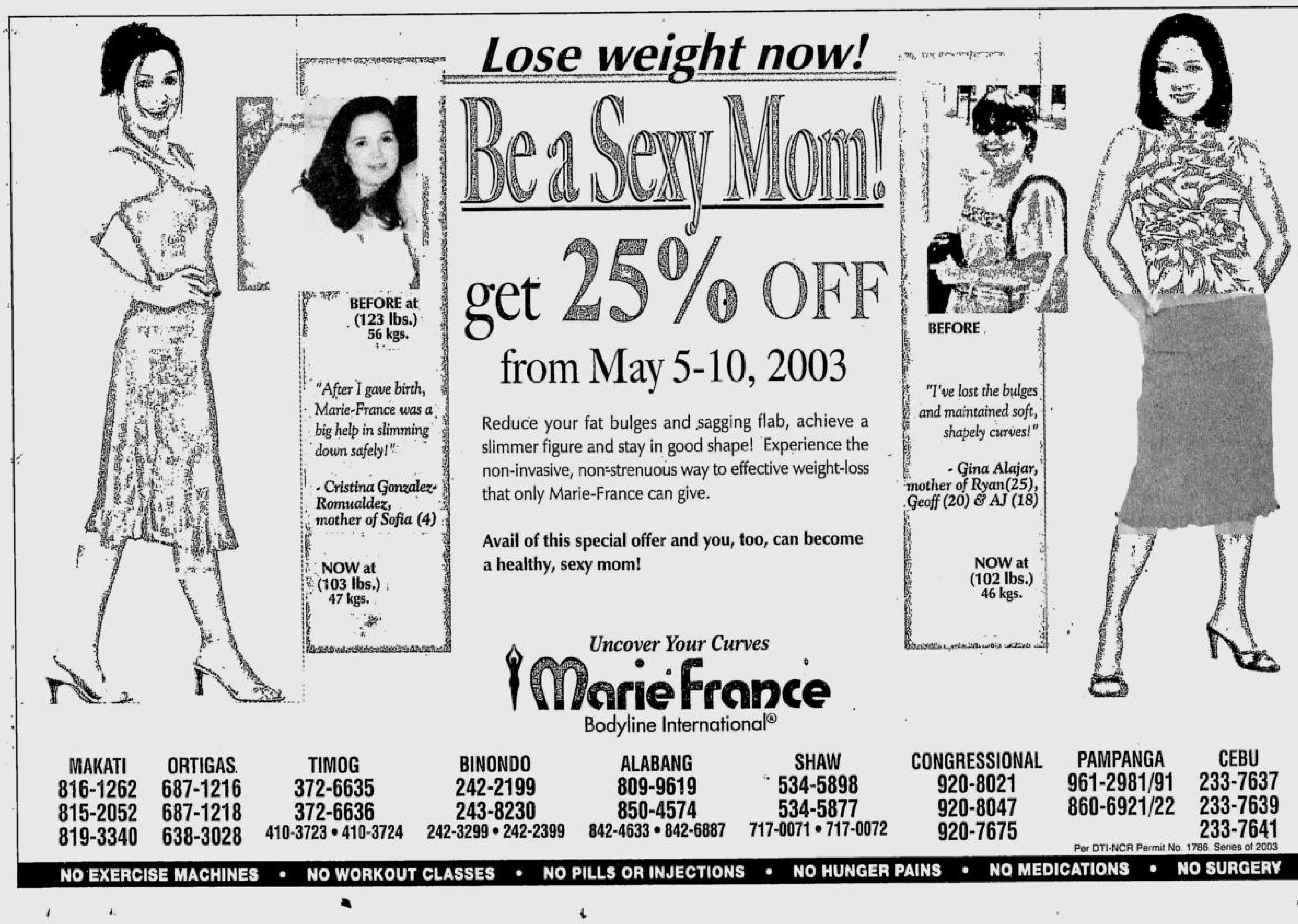
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Aggie won't bar Bt corn; 'running priest' joins fast

By Christine Gaylican and Gerald G. Lacuarta

THERE is no stopping the Department of Agriculture from propagating the genetically modified Bacillus thuringensis (Bt) corn.

DA officials led by Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. yesterday said no scientific evidence has been found to justify a moratorium on the planting and sale of the controversial crop throughout the country, as non-government organizations (NGOs) led by Greenpeace International have been demanding.

In a press briefing, Lorenzo said the DA would continue to hold dialogues with the NGOs, but stressed that the agency should not be held accountable for the lives of protesters.

Lorenzo was referring to four environmentalists now on their 15th day of a hunger strike in front of the DA building.

"I respect their principles," he said, "but in previous dialogues, I reminded them that maybe this wasn't something they should have to die for."

The hunger strikers will be joined tomorrow by Fr. Robert Reyes, the "running priest."

Reyes, known for taking up crusades in his running shoes, said he would join the protest fast at 11 a.m. after a "BT run" or "Bayan Takbo Against Bt corn" around the Quezon Memorial Circle.

"I shall offer my hunger as a prayer for the enlightenment of those in power," Reyes said in a statement released during a news conference yesterday at the hunger strike encampment.

The four hunger strikers—Obet Verzola, Mark Cervantes, Arma Bertuso and Luisita Esmao—vowed to continue their fast until Lorenzo, or President Macapagal-Arroyo, declares the moratorium that they are seeking.

Versola, the eldest striker at 40, was too weak to stand and face the media yesterday. But he had his statement read out by Bertuso, in which he said he was making "a final stand against a wrong." He also issued a waiver clearing his colleagues of any responsibility for the consequences of his action.

Also set to join the fast was Ann Larracas of Philippine Greens, Versola's organization.

Bt corn is being marketed under the brand name YieldGard by Monsanto, a United States-based pesticide company. The crop produces a naturally occurring Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) protein that makes it high-yielding and pest-resistant.

Upon the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the DA's Bureau of Plant Industry last year approved YieldGard's commercialization.

Dr. Oscar Zamora, a professor of environmental science at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños Laguna, said the introduction of genetically engineered (GE) crops into the country was still largely untested and could adversely affect the environment and agriculture.

In a separate interview, Segfredo R. Serrano, DA assistant secretary for policy and planning, said a moratorium would entail the creation of another scientific and technical review panel (STRP), which should produce evidence "overwhelming" enough to reverse the previous approval.

The members of the STRP that approved Bt corn commercialization were eminent scientists, Serrano said: "Their assessment is trustworthy."

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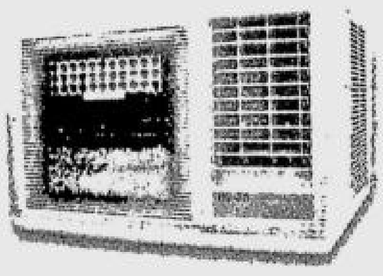

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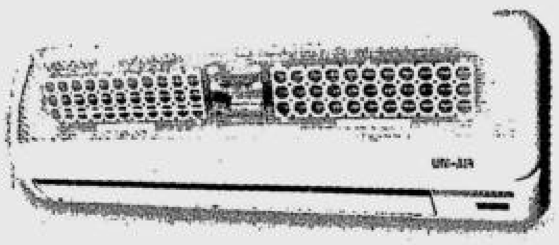

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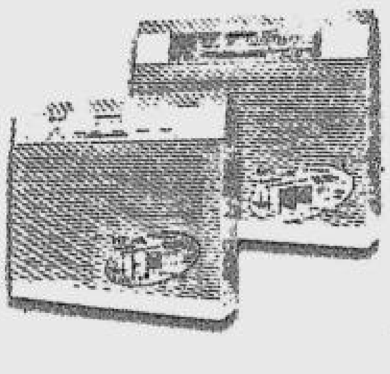

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Policemen's loan payments intact, officials insist

By TJ Burgonio

POLICE officials have denied willfully withholding some P628 million in policemen's loan payments to the Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association Inc. (AFPSLAI) in December 2002.

Chief Supt. Oscar Calderon, newly appointed acting director for comptrollership of the Philippine National Police, said the PNP failed to remit P628,176,560 to the AFPSLAI late last year because it did not have the funds.

He explained that after making payments to the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Pag-Ibig Fund, Philhealth and other financing institutions which were deemed to have highest priority, the PNP had "insufficient" funds when it came time to pay the AFPSLAI.

"It's not correct to say the PNP withheld the remittances to the AFPSLAI," he said.

Some Camp Crame personnel had complained the failure of the PNP to remit their payments prompted the AFPSLAI to deny new loan applications this year.

Delayed, not lost

But Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin told another story. She said the remittance had only been delayed, not lost, explaining that a Landbank branch had refused to accept the check representing the PNP remittance after banking hours during the holidays in December.

"(The PNP) already issued a check. They were trying to deposit it with Landbank. Unfortunately, Landbank had already closed (during the holidays)," she said.

"I wish Landbank had accepted the check. Unfortunately they did not, and we can't do anything about it anymore," Boncodin said. The money reverted to the National Treasury.

Boncodin, who was the guest at the flag-raising rites at Camp Crame yesterday, said she would issue a notice of cash allocation to the AFPSLAI for the immediate release of the remittance to the agency.

"The money is intact, it's with the Treasury," Calderon said later in a phone interview.

To avoid a similar problem in the future, Boncodin said she would propose that the Landbank honor any government-issued check deposited beyond banking hours, pointing out that the government would never issue a check that's "unfunded."

Calderon also assured policemen the PNP has been making its regular remittance to the AFPSLAI since the start of 2003.

PPA down by 18¢/kWh; 'peanuts,' say militants

By Abigail Ho and Ronnel Domingo

MANILA Electric Co. customers will have lower electricity bills in June with the decrease in the purchased power adjustment (PPA) in May.

Meralco data showed the PPA in May went down by 18 centavos to P2.72 per kilowatt-hour, from P2.90 per kWh in April. The decrease will be reflected in the June electric bill.

But not everyone is happy. The militant group Anakpawis yesterday dismissed the 18-centavo reduction in the PPA as "peanuts."

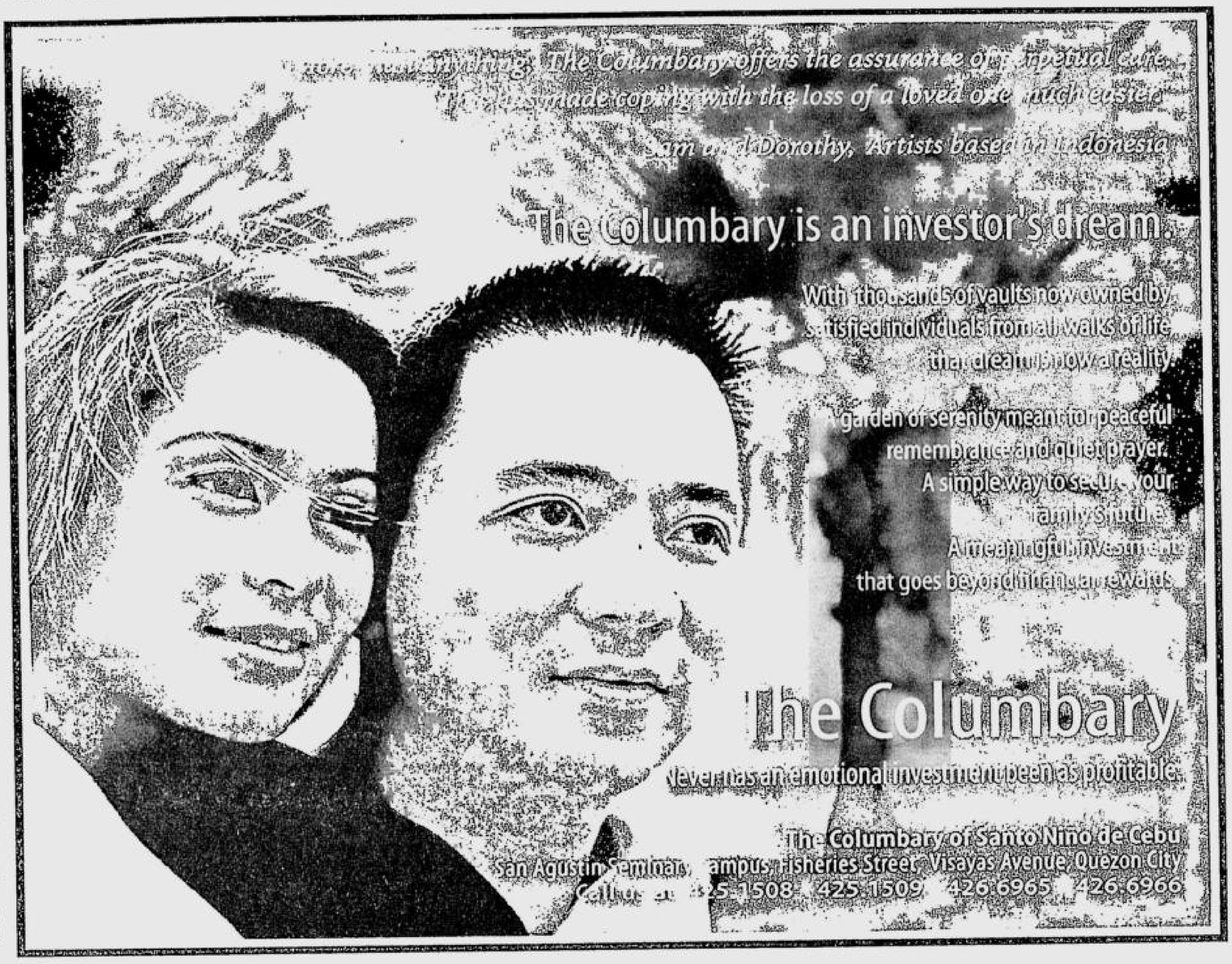
"Meralco announced the reduction merely to pacify consumers who are demanding the immediate refund of between P28 billion and P38 billion in excess charges collected over the past nine years," said Anakpawis, an umbrella group of the urban and rural poor, in a statement yesterday.

Anakpawis secretary general Cherry Clemente said: "The Lopez group cannot flaunt this (measly) reduction to escape public rage and condemnation. The fight against the PPA and for the recovery of billions of pesos plundered by Meralco will go on in the streets and the courts."

The PPA is an automatic cost recovery mechanism employed by distribution utilities like Meralco to cover fluctuations in the cost of power bought from independent power producers (IPPs) not included in the basic rate charge.

Meralco president Jesus Francisco said in a telephone interview over the weekend the decrease was due mainly to the improved foreign exchange rate the previous month.

The average forex rate in April (as of April 29) was P52.76 to a dollar.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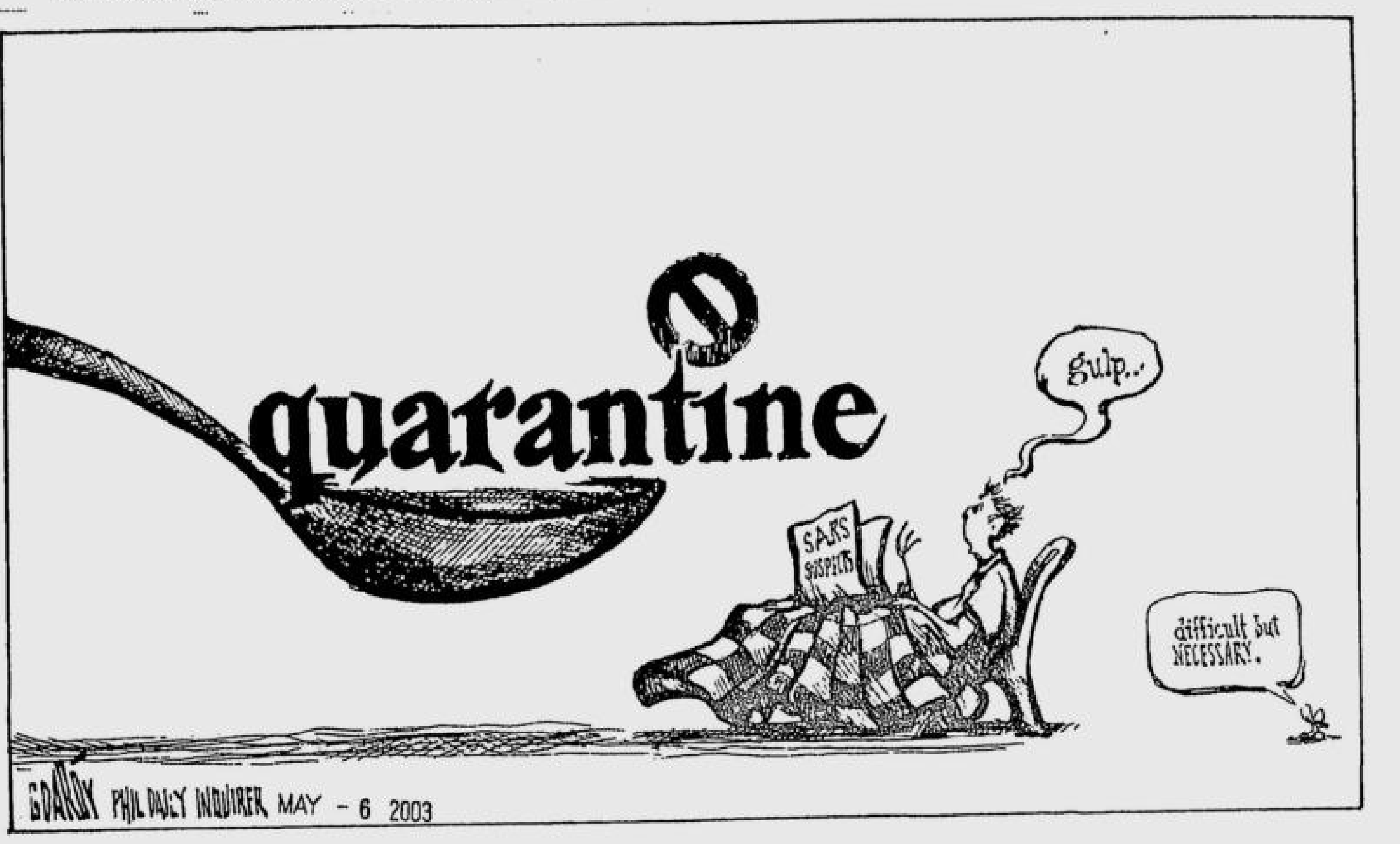

Killing journalists

YOU CAN figuratively kill a journalist by giving him a starvation wage and overworking him, making him cover four or five beats a day. Or, if you are a news subject or news source, you can kill a journalist morally by bribing him. Or, again, if you are a news subject and you don't want the way a journalist is writing stories about you, you can kill him with a gun, a grenade or a knife.

EDITORIAL

The last category of killing is the irreversible, final way of disposing of pesky journalists. Starvation wages can kill the spirit of journalists and make them easy prey to all sorts of temptation. Bribery can make them forget the mission and ethics of the profession. But killing is the ultimate solution to the problem of journalists who expose irregularities that some people would like to keep secret and hidden from public view.

A study made by six Communication Arts graduates of Miriam College, made available to the INQUIRER, shows that in 16 years, from 1986 to 2002, a total of 69 journalists were killed. Of the total, 39 were categorized as job-related; 22 had unknown causes or motives; and eight were non-work related.

Of the 39 journalists killed in line of duty, many were actively involved in crusades against corruption and related issues or were assigned to conflict areas. (Since the time the study was completed, two more journalists have been killed in line of duty, bringing the total in this category to 41.)

Of the 69 victims, 29 were from Mindanao, an area of conflict where soldiers, separatist groups like the MILF and MNLF, and insurgent groups like the NPA are constantly engaged in battle. Nineteen were from Luzon where many gambling, drug and crime syndicates operate. Insurgency is also a problem in some areas like Bicol and Cagayan Valley.

Thirty percent of the victims were reporters, correspondents or broadcasters; 22 percent, editors and publishers, and 18 percent, commentators. Five were columnists/reporters and four, photojournalists.

Ninety-two percent of the cases remain unsolved to this day. The status of 34 cases (49 percent) is not known. It is believed that many cases remain unsolved because of the reluctance or fear of witnesses to give information to investigators or to testify in court.

We like to pride ourselves as having "the freest press in Asia." But the number of journalists killed in the past 16 years—71 (updated figure)—gives the lie to this contention. How can the press be free when journalists are being killed with impunity, and many are being cowed into silence by the killings?

The Committee to Protect Journalists on April 30, three days before World Press Freedom Day (May 3), released a list of the 10 worst places in the world to be a journalist. The Philippines was not on the list, although it may as well be. Former Manila correspondent Linn Neumann, CPJ's man in Asia, once said that the Philippines was one of the most dangerous places in the world in which to practice journalism. It still is.

Why are the killings of Filipino journalists continuing unabated? Because only five (7.25 percent) of the 69 cases (Miriam College study) have been solved, and only three cases have ended in the conviction of the killers. Exactly 92.75 percent of the cases have remained unsolved. Powerful people are killing journalists, and they are doing it with impunity.

But journalists are beginning to do something about the situation. Tomorrow the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists Inc. will launch Countdown for Justice for slain journalist Edgar Damalerio of Pagadian City. It will also conduct a press briefing on the killings of Filipino journalists at a gathering at 10 a.m. at Club Filipino. We hope this will be the start of a sustained effort to obtain justice for the slain journalists.

The killing of journalists is the ultimate expression of the suppression of the freedom of the press. Killing is not the answer, because there are legal ways of getting back at journalists who some people believe may have libeled them or injured the reputation of their families, organizations or institutions.

Aggrieved news subjects can file complaints with ombudsmen, publishers or editors of newspapers or with the Philippine Press Council of the Philippine Press Institute. Or they can file libel cases. But many, as the figures attest, prefer to use the ultimate weapon of silencing journalists: assassination. Such a method has no place in a free, democratic society. Those who resort to this means have to be brought to justice. The killing of journalists must stop.

How to restore integrity of NPC membership

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IN a nutshell, the problem of the National Press Club is how to make the clubhouse jump again with patrons and at the same time attract real members of the working press by restoring the integrity of its roster of members and kicking out pseudo newsmen. The club needs responsible officers who can manage its affairs better, pay its debts and improve the building, its premises and services to attract the genuine members and make them proud of their club once more.

The presence of so many pseudo journalists drives the genuine newsmen away and so these *haosiaos* have the run of the place. And because the more responsible members stay away, those who run for office are members who are long on ambition but short on ability.

The problem has gone from bad to worse through the years. The debts and unpaid bills for electricity, water and telephone as well as real estate taxes have grown bigger. The building itself and its facilities are deteriorating. Money earned by the club has disappeared. There is no accounting of money earned from fund-raising activities. Millions of pesos given by Malacañang to capitalize a cooperative is now gone.

At the end of my second term as NPC president, the club had paid most of its bills, and I left a seed capital of P250,000 (a lot of money at that time) for a trust fund to be used for the training of business writers with the Asian Wall Street Journal in Hong Kong. The money was donated by ASWJ and a Filipino banker on condition that the interest earnings would be used only for the training and that the permanent members of the board of trustees of the trust fund are the banker, a representative of the ASWJ and the president of the NPC. Had that money been invested properly (interest rate for Treasury bills then were as high as 40 percent), that trust fund would be several million pesos now.

But the money was invested in long-term, low-interest Land Bank bonds and the interest earnings were withdrawn to help pay the salaries of employees, all in violation of the terms of the donation. Ask the officers of the NPC now where the trust fund is, and nobody can tell you.

Moreover, unpaid electric, water and phone bills have ballooned to millions of pesos.

The NPC's biggest asset, aside from the lot and building, the mural by National Artist Vicente Manansala is also deteriorating. It was almost burned during a fire before my term, leaving it covered with soot. When I became president, I had the mural cleaned and retouched by Manansala himself with the assistance of several other artists. But another five years later damaged the mural again, and it has remained that way since then. Worse, the mural is being continuously damaged by tables and chairs pushed against it in the restaurant.

Obviously, a succession of NPC administrations have not been able to safeguard its financial and art assets. Obviously, too, we can't let things go on like this indefinitely. Something must be done now before we lose everything (like that piano and the books in the library).

The first step towards that objective is to attract the more responsible members and leadership to run the club. How do you do that? Cleanse the roster of members. But how do you accomplish that without offending too many people?

This is my proposal: Retain the present members of the club. They can continue to enjoy the club premises and all its rights and privileges, except the right to vote. The latter is to restore the integrity of the roster of voting members and separate the chaff from the grain and attract the genuine newsmen back to the club. This right to vote is the root of the padding of the membership roster.

Let us use the system in many golf and country clubs: there will be a fixed number of voting members who will come from the present regular members who pass a strict qualification process. Thus, the genuine and respected members of the working press will be the first voting members. They will be removed as their qualifications change—say, when a member transfers from a newspaper to a government or public relations job.

Applicants who qualify but can't be admitted because of the limited number of voting members will be on a priority list. They will be accepted as members as often as there are vacancies. Meanwhile, they will be regular members of the club with all the rights and privileges except the right to vote. To a member who did not apply simply to be able to vote for a sponsoring candidate, that is no skin off his nose. If he is not satisfied with that, it can mean only that he has one selfish reason for applying: to be able to vote for a candidate or candidates.

At the same time, there will be a watchdog group, consisting of the members on the waiting list, constantly watching the voting members. If any of them is no longer qualified because he has changed jobs or has not been paying his NPC bills, or has committed an offense punishable by expulsion, the members-in-waiting can ask the membership committee to investigate his allegations and, if warranted, remove the voting member and admit another to replace him.

Leaving this job only to the membership committee has not been satisfactory. With other members waiting to get in as watchdogs, no *haosiao* should be able to slip through and the working journalists should be proud to be members of their club again.

Past and present

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

JEFF TAGGART of Ann Arbor, Michigan, has an interesting letter. Part of it says:

"I regularly read, and enjoy, your column on the Internet edition of the INQUIRER. You might be interested to know that there is virtually zero awareness of the Philippine-American War here in the United States. Some people know of the Spanish-American War, from history classes and so on. They will have heard of Admiral Dewey. The ensuing war between American soldiers and Filipino nationalists is just not taught. I only learned of it by reading the Pulitzer Prize-winning book 'In Our Image' by Stanley Karnow. He wrote that up to 200,000 Filipinos were killed, many of them noncombatants, including boys as young as 10 years of age.

"I did not know. I am sorry. To learn more, I have ordered a copy of DB Schirmer's "Republic or Empire," which you mentioned in today's column.

"I and many people I know share your opposition to the Iraq War. I find it interesting and ironic that the result may be the establishment of an Iraqi Islamic state—not what GWB had in mind, I imagine."

Serendipitously, at nearly the same time, and as though to prove Taggart's point, another American (I presume he is one), Tom Dryden, wrote me to complain that I exaggerated things in that column: "I must say, you are making quite a stretch today [April 24th]. The United States did not seize the Philippines, Spain was very eager to turn the Philippines over to the United States, and Mr. Auginaldo [his spelling] agreed as he did not want to turn the country over to varied insurgents,"

He either did not know, or forgot, that Emilio Aguinaldo was the head of the "varied insurgents." "Insurgents" itself was the word the Americans used to refer to the Filipinos who resisted their occupation. Which is how it appeared in subsequent accounts of the Philippine-American War, written by Americans and passed on to Filipinos. It was not until much later, particularly after "Liberation" (another concept that has to be put in quotation marks) that the account was challenged by Filipino historians.

The only thing Dryden got quite right there was that Spain was eager to turn its former colony over to the United States. Even then not completely so. Spain was pleased to do it only after the Filipino revolutionaries made its rule on the islands untenable. Aguinaldo and company, who had gone on exile in Hong Kong after the Treaty of Biak na Bato, a fitful truce between them and the Spanish colonial government, were contemplating another uprising before the Americans came along. Spain in any case did not donate the Philippines to the United States; it sold it for $20 million in the Treaty of Paris. At that, Spain got a huge bargain. It got paid for something it had already lost.

The relative ease with which Bush was able to conscript a whole nation with a fiercely libertarian tradition, a tradition jealously fought for at various times by John Quincy Adams, Mark Twain and Martin Luther King, to invade another country on the pretext that it had weapons of mass destruction (which it helped supply to begin with) must testify to many Americans knowing little about their nation's dealings with the world. They may know a great deal about their own country's history but not about their country's history with respect to others.

Pretty much the only thing that has disturbed the idea in the American mind of the United States intervening only to impose democracy on the world is the Vietnam War, which was the subject of several movies, among them "Apocalypse Now," a modern retelling of Joseph Conrad's "The Heart of Darkness." Even then, as Karnow protested in a review of Robert MacNamara's memoir on that war, which was meant to be an apology for it, the perspective is not that the United States brutalized another country but that it made a bad mistake out of noble intentions. The war itself, if not its prosecution, continues to be justified.

But the real tragedy here goes even beyond this. The real tragedy here is that Filipinos themselves do not know, or refuse to know, their history with the United States. The real tragedy here is that, to paraphrase Taggart, there is virtually zero awareness of the Philippine-American War here in the Philippines. Some people know of the Spanish-American War, from history classes and so on. They will have heard of Admiral Dewey. The ensuing war between American soldiers and Filipino nationalists is glossed over or not taught at all. Few know that up to 200,000 Filipinos were killed, many of them noncombatants, including boys as young as 10 years of age. Certainly, they have not read of it, whether from Karnow or from Constantino. Particularly these days, when people no longer read, least of all history.

That the people of a conquering country will cling to its myths even whey are obdurately refuted by facts is bad enough. That the people of a conquered country will do so, that is the most unkindest cut of all. Other conquered countries at least remember their subjugation with bitterness and their struggles against it with pride. Most Filipinos do not, if indeed we remember at all. Most former colonies have since become friends with their colonizers but only with the tacit contriteness of their former oppressors and their willingness to make up for what they did. We have become friends with our colonizer only with our open thankfulness for what they did and our willingness to have it done to us again and again. Only with us saying: We deserved to have been conquered. We were lucky to be conquered.

That's the text joke, not quite incidentally, a lot of Filipinos kept sending during the war in Iraq. Why doesn't the US invade us so it can rebuild us?

It did. That mindless tittering is the result of it.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com.ph

MILF could alienate Malaysia

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SEN. JOKER ARROYO appears to be quite ill-informed when he accused Speaker Jose de Venecia of railroading House Resolution 16, which calls for the convening of a constituent assembly for the purpose of amending the Constitution. Arroyo, claiming that there was no quorum and that everyone present was practically asleep when that resolution was passed at close to midnight last March 19, said the House has "trivialized" the stringent requirements of amending the Charter.

Records, however, show that the chamber was wide awake that night and the deliberations were fully covered by the tri-media up to the end of the voting close to midnight, with a record 147 members of the House, constituting much more than a quorum, still present. Many of them, in fact, stayed around to be interviewed after the voting.

* * *

A hot subject such as "Constituent assembly or Constitutional convention" was bound to be hotly debated, as in fact it was for weeks before the House went into the Holy Week recess. It was not only the minority bloc that took hours to interpellate Rep. Eduardo Nachura, chair of the committee on constitutional amendments, and his co-sponsors Gerry Espina and Constantino Jaraula. Leading members of the Liberal Party to which Nachura belongs took turns in interpellating him, notably Tarlac Rep. Noynoy Aquino who's against Charter change and party president Florencio Abad who favors a "con-con."

* * *

By tradition in the House, the last to interpellate a bill or resolution author is always the minority leader, and on March 19, Carlos Padilla of the LDP grilled Nachura. In fact, Padilla sought to remand Resolution 16 to the committee and moved for a division of the house, which would have required a roll call of the members present, but his motion was roundly defeated. After three hours of interpellation, the House voted, finishing at 11:55 p.m. with an overwhelming 134 votes for constitutional assembly and only 13 against.

* * *

The attack on Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, by hundreds of MILF rebels last Sunday was outrageous primarily for the fact that so many non-combatants were killed and hurt, including those the rebels kidnapped. More civilians than military were killed or wounded. The rebels also burned the public market, an act which has no military value but greatly hurts the civilian population and the local economy.

The MILF attack should help convince the bleeding hearts, including those in the media, that the MILF is quite insincere in its pursuit of peace and that despite its carefully-crafted ideological posturing, it is turning out to be nothing more than a terrorist group. In the battle for hearts and minds the dissidents are waging, they certainly lost a lot of points with the Siocon attack. Or do they no longer care?

* * *

I phoned Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Eduardo Ermita to get his views on the attack, and he opined that it seems to be "posturing" on the part of the MILF on the eve of the resumption of exploratory talks in Kuala Lumpur from May 9-11, under the auspices of the Malaysian government. "*Nagpapakita sila ng gilas,* so they can bargain from a position of strength," he said. To bolster his theory, he noted that MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu was quoted as saying that the aim of the Siocon attack was "to cripple" the Army's 44th Infantry Battalion. This doesn't wash, Ermita said, since the headquarters of the 44th IB is outside the town, far from the MILF's targets.

* * *

Ermita stressed that the MILF's new round of violence is "a wrong move" as it could alienate Malaysia, which has publicly announced its invitation to the RP government and MILF elements for talks in Kuala Lumpur. "The MILF seems to be taking the Malaysians very lightly," he said, adding that by contrast, the government has been sending Presidential Adviser for Special Concerns Norberto Gonzales to KL every time there is a problem, to show its sincerity.

* * *

What Ermita was implying was that the MILF should court Malaysia, Libya and Indonesia instead of alienating them with their violent attacks, since these countries are very influential in the OIC, being part of the OIC's observation team, with Indonesia chairing the OIC's Committee of the Eight. Over the years, Malaysia and Indonesia have been so helpful in bringing the two dissident Moro groups to the negotiating table. Ermita pointed out that during her one-day trip to Bangkok to attend the Asean summit on SARS, President Macapagal-Arroyo and acting Malaysian PM Abdullah Badawi found time to talk about the problems in the south, and Badawi reiterated his government's support for the peace process.

* * *

This columnist, too, had written just last week of the unequivocal assurance of Malaysian Defense Minister Najib Razak during his recent visit here of his country's intention to work with the Philippine government to bring about a lasting solution to the problem in Mindanao, so as to develop its full potential. In the same breath, Razak admonished the MILF to weed out the "extremist" elements in their ranks who are interpreting Islam "the wrong way" and to practice jihad against poverty, ignorance and all the social ills in Mindanao, and not against the Christians.

* * *

What about the reported MILF demand that the camp the military captured from them earlier this year be returned to them in return for a cessation of attacks? Ermita stressed that this issue was never a part of the negotiations, even from the first interim agreement on March 24, 2001 early in the Macapagal administration. "It's non-negotiable even now," he said.

Blind and sighted angels

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

EVEN if director Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil had not asked me to watch "Angels" over Cinema One channel last Sunday, I would have taken time to watch the digital video film anyway. I'd seen the trailer and was immediately intrigued by the possibility of watching Gina Alajar portraying a blind woman, wife and mother.

Sure enough, Alajar and Nonie Buencamino, who plays her husband, live up to our expectations. Meryl Streep once said that it's the duty of an actor "to stand up for your character." Alajar and Buencamino do not only portray the blind couple sympathetically, they also convey their dignity and strength.

Most admirable is the movie's refusal to take the easy way out and portray husband, wife and children as heroes or else as eternal victims. Gina, especially, gives a most natural and relaxed performance, allowing us a glimpse into a real three-dimensional woman who just happens to be blind.

Her life is not defined by her disability, only complicated by it. But even acknowledging the special difficulties she and her husband face because they are blind, they struggle daily to prove that they are no less competent or blessed as parents because of it.

Carrying a disproportionate share of responsibility in the family is the middle child, a boy. As the oldest sighted child, it is his job to escort his parents, who work as masseurs, to and from their clients. At home, he must also look after his sisters, especially the older one who is blind and mentally disabled as a result of a doctor's negligence at her birth. Such great responsibilities would weigh heavily on anyone, especially on a boy who yearns for the freedom of an uncomplicated childhood.

* * *

"ANGELS" is told mainly from this boy's point of view. It opens with his recurring dream of flying above the busy streets of the city accompanied by an angel, until they fall after hitting a skyscraper which the angel didn't see, because "the angel is blind." His parents' blindness is a fact of life that the boy must constantly deal with, a daily struggle to come to terms with it while wishing it away. Proud but also resentful of the fact that his family depends on him, he must find a middle ground between accommodating his family's needs and asserting his own.

"Angels" is based on a real-life story and on a real-life family, inspired by a news feature on "TV Patrol" after the couple sought the media's help to keep custody of their children after neighbors reported them to the DSWD. Perhaps this is the reason "Angels" manages to convey a well-rounded portrait of family life under the most trying conditions, free of the conventions of fictive story telling.

A friend active in the disability movement once explained to me why they prefer the term "people living with disabilities" or the "disabled" to "handicapped." "We live with our disabilities and want to lead independent lives," she said, "but we are handicapped by the environment." These barriers range from the physical to the cultural, foremost of which is the notion that people living with disabilities should settle for charity or pity, and not seek to live full-dimensional lives, including founding and nurturing their families.

The family in "Angels" clearly contradicts this cliché. If only for getting this point across in a forthright and honest manner, "Angels" deserves the widest audience it can muster.

* * *

I DON'T know how "Xerex," the Aubrey Miles starrer, is doing against the "X-Men 2" juggernaut. But it seems to me that the only local film managing to keep its head above the flood of cinemas devoted to screening the comics-based Hollywood action fantasy is the Judy Ann Santos-Piolo Pascual vehicle "Till there Was You."

My son, who only reluctantly accompanied his mother and girlfriend Michelle to Cinema 7 at G4, kidded us that everybody else was buying tickets for "X-2," and he was so embarrassed to be seen lining up for the Juday-Piolo film. "I'll bet there'll only be us at the theater," he said.

Well, boo-hoo, when we rushed into the theater, we found all seats taken and had to settle for the aisle steps until a couple left some minutes later.

Staying behind to catch the opening scenes we had missed, the theater filled up long before the lights went out, a sure sign of healthy box-office performance.

It's no mystery why "Till there Was You" should rake in P10 million on its opening day. It's the classic "*kilig*" movie, a romantic comedy that capitalizes, and how, on the Juday-Piolo pairing. But I'm happy to report that it goes way beyond titillating besotted fans, for it offers as well a solid story and, even better, meaty characters.

* * *

THOUGH director Joyce Bernal plays it safe and straight in this movie, she is served excellently by her screenwriters. The leads emerge as believable and unique individuals, not templates of "personalities" as dictated by the romantic comedy format. Judy Ann Santos, always a competent actress, is delightful in this movie, abandoning her annoying mannerisms (developed, I believe, during the string of Juday-Wowie quickies) for energy and sincerity. I think this is the role that comes closest to her real, off-screen personality, and the ease of characterization shows.

And Papa Piolo? Well, can any normal woman resist that face and body? In the course of the film, there's raucous laughter as the female audience laughs with and shares in Juday's swooning pleasure in his company. I have a line for all my sisters to share: "*Ngiti pa lang ulam na.*" At heart, every woman in the audience knows what's going through Juday's head—and body.

Ad Nauseum

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

A FRIEND writes to tell me that she is convinced the late Bobby Greenwood (some of you might have known him) was right in saying, "No good deed goes unpunished!" I am printing her letter in the hope that someone in the government might just get embarrassed and do something about it. Since people love to point out that there's no *delicadeza* left anymore, much less common decency, this may well be another of those useless exercises in futility.

During the 100th anniversary of the Thomasites, there was apparently some attempt to find where some of those who had died here were buried. They found more than what they had bargained for. My friend says they "found" a totally overgrown and neglected plot at the North Cemetery, the visible tombstones of which indicated the remains interred were primarily American (with names like "Anderson," etc.). As a member of the Board of the American Association Philippines, which oversees the upkeep of the plot reserved for indigent Americans here, as well as the American teachers' (Thomasites) plot, shed was concerned over the unchecked overgrowth and the deplorable neglect of the plot.

My friend continues:

" I could find no one (individual or organization) that was 'responsible' for it—so with some doing I managed to convince the AAP Board that we should take some action. The VFW (one post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars here) helped us to get assistance for the clean-up in the form of students from the ISM (International School Manila) high school community service group who donated four days of their time doing a tremendous job of hacking and pulling at the vegetation—to clear the plot. (They even made a donation to pay for a caretaker to continue the work of clearing the plot.)

"While clearing the plot, they noted that two of the crypts were damaged and the remains were exposed... The AAP is working to get these closed up and proper necrological services held. However, I was totally shocked and horrified to find—on my surprise visit yesterday, in preparation for a meeting on the subject today—that many MORE crypts were laid open... It seems, according to the caretaker, that we have a case of "grave looting"—not for 14th century porcelains or such, but for any possible gold TEETH! The looters hammer and smash into the east end of the crypts (where the head normally lays—although I am told the corpse should be FACING east, not west—as is the case in all these we saw). The objective is to get to the teeth!!!

"So, in doing the 'good deed' of clearing out the overgrowth of the plot, we have made it an easy target for looters! The *bantay* cannot be there 24 hours, but he is suggesting we set up a tent for him to keep watch at night, because it is of course at night that these ghouls do their work—a noble idea, but we all know this will not stop the looting. I am, as I said, horrified and shocked—and yet why? After 40 plus years in this country, I should NOT be shocked by such activity beneath the noses of the so-called "authorities"—the "guards," uniformed and otherwise—who sleepily man the entrance gate and obviously have no authority or will to do anything other than get their pay checks—and there is no use in pointing out to City Hall that allowing squatters to live in the cemetery means there is no need for guards because so-called "security" is already breached by the fact that "outsiders" are "inside." City Hall only cares about the fact that these squatters are voters.

"I know that any attempt to get the Department of Health and Manila City Hall to do anything in this case is a waste of time and effort, but it is certainly just another example of the poor civil service we have that even the dead are not allowed any peace! I hear Bobby's deep voice saying, 'I've told you, Babe, no good deed goes unpunished!'

"I have deliberately not identified the plot—but would certainly like to hear if the DOH and/or City Hall has anything to say regarding this matter. On the other hand, I am pretty sure I can guess the reply. After all, when we held the centennial celebration for the Thomasites in 2001, AAP had a plaque ready to install—no mention of names, etc., just a simple memorial noting the date, etc. of the event of the commemoration. However, the mayor's office insisted on putting up a plaque (with names of prominent individuals participating in the event!) and there are pictures of the unveiling, with the US ambassador, etc. A few months later I went out to see the plot (I had been abroad when all this was done) and lo! no plaque... With some 'detective work' we found it was at the mayor's office 'for safe keeping'!!!??? It is a wonder no one has stolen the brass off of Manuel Roxas crypt!"

Chances are this whole thing will be shrugged off as something caused by poverty since every ill around us is usually excused in that manner. Criminality, poor service, immorality, drugs, you name it, it's all due to poverty. The only problem with that excuse is that the worst of the crimes are generally done by people who have more than enough money. Well, then aside from Bobby Greenfield's adage, how about the Duchess of Windsor who is claimed to have said, "One can never be too thin or too rich"? It might have been taken to heart by those who remain of Ali Baba's 40 thieves.

Casualties of war

YOUNG BLOOD

Oliver E. Samson

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

AT around eight in the evening of Feb. 14, 2003, Ange, fortyish, was driving his passenger jeepney home. At about the same, Raymond, a 14-year-old *balot* vendor, was watching television, again, inside the police outpost. The boy had been seen there quite often, watching television with the policemen on duty to whom he sold *balot*.

The police outpost is located in a busy part of town. Two kilometers away is the newly built provisional military camp.

To the residents, the surprising deployment of armed forces to their place meant fighting could come any time. Military vehicles had been coming and going day and night for weeks. Troops were seen patrolling various barangays at night, making residents even more worried about possible encounters. Many young men were recruited to join the ranks of the Cafgu. Curfew was enforced in several barangays, and *tanods* had been given instructions to apprehend anyone below 17 years of age still out in the street after nine in the evening.

Alarmed by everything that was happening around them, the residents petitioned for the removal of the provisional military camp. But the camp remained.

Ange had only one passenger left when a band of men in fatigue uniforms armed with M-16 assault rifles stopped them in a dark and quiet part of the town. He felt his hands turn cold as they approached. He knew before he applied the brakes that those men were guerrillas of the New People's Army.

This was not the first time they had stopped a passenger jeepney. They had commandeered jeepneys for their previous raids, and their drivers had returned unharmed to their normal routine afterwards.

The NPAs use passenger jeepneys in their attacks and when they withdraw they just abandon them before disappearing into their mountain strongholds.

Ange did not expect his experience to be different from those he had heard from his fellow drivers. Nobody, perhaps including the NPA guerrillas themselves, did not expect him to have a tough time once they were done.

They dropped him and his passenger, a criminology student and neighbor, at a deserted area. They took his jeepney and drove to the police outpost.

When they got close enough, they started firing at the outpost. Then after a few seconds of firing, they fled. Three police officers were killed. And Raymond, too, who was hit in the head.

Ange rushed to the police station to report that his vehicle had been taken by NPA guerrillas. The next day it was found in a remote barangay of another town.

To his utter shock, Ange received a subpoena for his arrest several days after. He had been charged with multiple murder for the deaths of Raymond and the three policemen.

The court ordered Ange held without bail and his jeepney impounded.

Ange has been under detention for two months now, without the opportunity to earn a living. His family weeps. His neighbors and friends denounce his accusers.

Ange is a father of five, is a member of the Four-square Church.

His wife is ailing. And the case file against her husband has made her condition worse. His eldest son had to stop his college education.

Ange continues to deny complicity in the attack. His fellow drivers are dismayed by the misfortune that has befallen him. They readily admit that if they had been in the same situation, they would have done exactly what Ange did and let the guerrillas take the jeepney.

Ange and I live in the same barangay. I have known him since I was a small kid. He is a good and quiet man. He is a common man, holding no political beliefs and aspirations. All he is interested in is earning a living for his family by driving his jeep. He wants to be left alone to live his own life, but now he is being detained and facing trial for deaths of three policemen and Raymond.

Raymond was a victim! And Ange is a victim, too! Both of them were out in the street that day to earn a living, unaware that they would be involved in the confrontation between other warring parties .

During the first day of Ange's trial on March 3, 2003, his family, relatives, neighbors, fellow drivers, friends and members of his church—all convinced of his innocence—marched to the municipal trial court. They carried placards affirming his innocence and calling for the dismissal of his case. His sick wife lined standing among the crowd, craning her neck so that she could see her husband.

Her face reflected her deep pain over her husband's ordeal and his fight to regain his freedom.

Their daughter was also there, pleading with her father's accusers to let him go. But she couldn't say what was in her heart very clearly. She broke down in tears as she began talking over a megaphone. All she was able to utter was the plea: "*Maawa kayo sa Tatay ko. Napakabait n'ya sa aming magkakapatid. Hindi n'ya magagawa 'yon!* (Have pity on my father. He has been very kind to all of us in our family. He couldn't have done what he is accused of doing.)"

Ange was helpless. Resisting the NPA guerrillas was out of the question. He had a family awaiting for him at home, a family that desperately needed his support. If he acted the way he did, it was because he wanted to live for the sake of his family. It was his choice, and it was not a crime. I myself would have done the same thing if I were on his shoes.

Raymond is gone. His family deeply grieves his loss. Everyone was sorry over his untimely death. But if he were still alive today he would have been moved with pity for the man who is being detained and tried for a crime he did not commit. Both of them are casualties of war.

Oliver E. Samson, 27, is a member of Katribu, a local organization in Barcelona, Sorsogon, working for peace and justice.

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Should babies pay for sins of others?

TWO FILIPINO babies who have already gotten a sponsor for life-saving heart procedures in the United States cannot make the trip because the parents of the stricken children were "found to be ineligible" for US visas, according to an official of the US Embassy in Manila.

"Throwing out the baby with the bath water"—in this case two babies—is not the intent of newer, stricter immigration rules to limit foreigners entering the United States. Only the insane would believe that.

The US government's reaction to 9/11 I fully understand, but somewhere along the line some people need to make a distinction between visa applicants who may have a dark agenda in mind once they are admitted to the United States and the poor parents of two babies who will die without undergoing the operations now waiting to be performed by a team of American doctors.

No doubt, the US Embassy will say it is just "doing its job." But if I were the one doing that job, I would find it impossible to sleep very well knowing that by saying no to their parents, I would be sealing the fate of the two babies.

After 9/11, the United States is in a xenophobic (hatred of foreigners) mood. They can blame anyone for 9/11, but they should never blame two innocent babies who never asked to be brought into this world in the first place and make them pay for the sins of others. In fact, they shouldn't blame their poor parents who are now condemned to watch their little ones die.

—LT. AND MRS. ELLIOTT ANDERSON,
Pan-Ay Clarin, Misamis Occidental

It's pay-back time for Meralco

SINCE I am a college graduate, my family expects me to help pay the household bills once I get a job. I took a quick glance at our récent electric bill. It said P2,943.20, and of that amount, 45 percent was for the PPA!

The PPA, or what the people call "Puro Pahirap Adjustment," has long been causing headaches to our parents and breadwinners in general. Now a new item has been added to the list of charges: the Universal Missionary Charge costing P .0168/kWh.

According to Meralco, it is "in compliance [with] Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) order dated Jan. 31, 2003 (ERC Case No. 2002-165) (mandating) all Distribution Utilities [to] collect a missionary electrification charge which will be remitted to Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Mgt. Corp. (PSALM) NPC, Small Power Utilities Group (SPUG)."

The amount is little, but that is not the point. Whenever a measure allows it to extract more money from the consumers, Meralco readily implements it. But when it comes to returning the people's money they got from overcharging, Meralco makes unceasing appeals to the Supreme Court.

The Court's decision to turn down Meralco's second motion for reconsideration and its refusal to entertain any more appeals are just. I fervently hope that with these developments, the government will be more aggressive in pushing Meralco to return the P28 billion it took away from its consumers. Apparently, Meralco is employing delaying tactics. The people's interest must be guarded against these.

—JANICE SARMIENTO CAMBRI,
Department of English Studies and Comparative Literature, University of the Philippines, Diliman

More precise way of locating typhoons

LIKE MOST PEOPLE I was keen to know where the recent typhoon was going, and when.

It was not possible to know that using news items such as the one saying it was "spotted 500 km east northeast of Daet, Camarines Norte."

Where on earth is that? Without a map, and knowledge of how to determine coordinates, a reader would have no idea. I presume Daet is where there is a meteorological station.

Can I suggest that they, or your newspaper interpret this data to say (from my rough calculation): "The typhoon was spotted just off Vigan."

Otherwise readers get the impression the typhoon is somewhere in the south (of Manila) when in fact it's far to the north.

With the typhoon season now beginning, this would be a helpful change.

—PETER WALLACE, 14/F Sagittarius Bldg., HV dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City

Laying the blame squarely on the MILF

WE condemn the MILF's massacre of 13 civilians and the wounding of 17 other people in Maigo, Lanao del Norte, last April 26. They shot the civilians despite their pleas for mercy to be spared.

The MILF only revealed its true colors as the number one terrorist group in the country. While it pretended to talk of peace, it continued to sow terror in our midst. Since the first week of April, the MILF has killed a total of 47 civilians and maimed more than 100 in a spate of bombings at the International Airport and Sasa wharf in Davao City and killings in Central Mindanao and Lanao del Norte. These civilian casualties are grim reminders of the scourge of terror perpetrated by the MILF.

It seems that the MILF is making a mockery of the peace negotiations which the government held in Malaysia last March. Our field commanders wonder about the true intent of the MILF, who are evidently insincere about forging the peace agreement.

Similarly, we denounce the apology extended by Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF vice chairman for political affairs, to the victims' families, whose loved ones were treacherously slaughtered in Maigo by MILF terrorists led by Abdurahman Macaparalias, Commander Bravo and Commanders Yahyah Lucsadato and Minsupala. Jaafar only wanted to exculpate the MILF's hierarchy of its liability for the murder of the civilians.

—LT. COL. JOSELITO E. KAKILALA,
Acting Army spokesperson/chief, Public Affairs, Office of the Army chief, Fort Bonifacio

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be advised that your favorite **FAMILY'S Brand Sardines**
manufactured by Universal Canning, Inc. of Zamboanga City and
endorsed by well-loved television and movie personality Kristine Hermosa
has finally obtained a **WRIT OF PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION**
dated 11 April 2003 from the Regional Trial Court of Manila, Branch 24,
in the case docketed as **Civil Case No. 02-102988, AGAINST** the identically
or similarly branded Family Brand Sardines distributed by
PAGODA PHILIPPINES, INC., the label of which bears the entry
"Manufactured by Slord Development Corporation,
Navotas. Metro Manila."

By virtue of said Writ of Preliminary Injunction,
Pagoda Philippines Inc., its representatives, assignees,
agents, dealers, and persons acting on its behalf,
are enjoined from the following acts:

1. Advertising, promoting and marketing its canned sardine products bearing the "Family Brand Sardines" label or any other variance thereof; and

2. Distributing, manufacturing and selling its canned sardine products bearing "Family Brand Sardines" label or any other variance thereof.

Violation of the foregoing is cause for **contempt** and
may be punishable by **imprisonment** by the
Regional Trial Court of Manila, Branch 24.

This is a message of concern from the
UNIVERSAL CANNING, INC.,
makers of your trusted
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Ayala, Zamboanga City.

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Calle San Isidro, Ayala, Zamboanga City 7000 Philippines
Tels. (62) 991-3546 / 991-3570 / 982-0023 / 993-1472
Fax (62) 993-1472 / 982-0022

Distribution of Bt corn opposed

THE SIERRA CLUB, an international environmental non-governmental organization based in the United States and Canada, recently learned that the Philippine government has approved the commercial release of Monsanto's pest-resistant Bt corn. We also understand that nine Filipinos have launched an indefinite hunger strike to ask the government to stop the distribution of Bt corn seeds for commercial planting.

The Sierra Club is in full support of the strikers' demands and is requesting the government to take immediate action to meet them. Specifically, we urge that for the health and welfare of the remaining seven strikers and for the health and welfare of all Filipinos, the President should stop the distribution of this genetically modified corn. The Sierra Club believes that the development and use of products from generic engineering research should be based on a reverence for nature and life, as well as socioeconomic equity—conditions which are not met by the proposed release of Bt corn.

We understand that the President has been told by established agricultural scientists that Bt crops are genetically engineered to produce insecticidal proteins derived from genes of the bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt). While Bt is a natural insecticide that can be used safely, engineering Bt genes into plants so that the toxins are expressed in relatively high levels in a large proportion of the plants throughout most of their growing period is another matter.

Abundant evidence of harmful effects on the environment has already emerged. Bt crops impact negatively on non-target endangered species such as the monarch butterfly, the black swallowtail and other lepidopteran species. Beneficial species such as lacewings that prey on corn borer were also harmed when given an artificial diet containing Bt toxin or corn borers or other lepidopteran larvae that had fed on Bt corn.

Another critical issue is that widespread application of genetically patented seeds, with the accompanying restrictions on how they are managed, is a dangerous privatization of a global agricultural resource which is turning the accumulated wisdom of 10,000 years of agriculture into the intellectual property of multinational corporations which then have new "rights" to second and subsequent generations of seeds.

For all these reasons, Sierra Club urges a stop to the distribution of this corn.

—RICHARD A. CELLARIUS vice president for International Affairs, Sierra Club, 85 Second St, 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94105, 621 Park Avenue, Prescott, AZ

An answered prayer

THE GRANT of a temporary restraining order (TRO) on the suspension of Malabon City Mayor Amado Vicencio is an answered prayer for the constituents of the city. This is a clear sign that in the end, vested interests will never prevail in a city blessed with a leader who is continuously working for its progress.

Vicencio has always kept silent about his accomplishments. But this recent barrage of criticism and smear campaign should not be allowed to pass without the public knowing the mayor's many achievements.

Under his leadership, a flood-prone municipality has developed into a city poised to claim its place as one of the country's more progressive cities. Optimism is high in Malabon under his leadership. This is largely due to well-crafted and swift implementation of various public services.

Aside from solid waste management programs, the mayor spearheaded the CAMANAVA Mega Flood Control and Drainage System and the dredging of the Malabon and Navotas River and the Tullahan River which effectively addressed Malabon's problem with floods.

Numerous educational facilities and school buildings were also among the mayor's significant contribution to the city. Not to mention half-way houses that serve as a transient home of rehabilitated drug dependents.

I hope that the mayor will continue its noble stewardship. May the Lord guide him and give him strength to do his duties.

—PASTOR JONATHAN SAMONTE, 21-C Arellano St., Malabon City

Pinoy germs

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

FAMISHED from a long day of shopping, you buy a hamburger and are about to chomp away when, horrors, it comes alive and escapes, crashing to the floor.

What do you do? You pick up the burger and brush away the "dirt." With a sheepish smile, you explain, "It hasn't been a minute" and go on to eat.

The "one minute" rule is not absolute. There are variations on the "safe period," ranging from five seconds to five minutes, the presumed time needed by germs to "contaminate" the food that we've dropped on the floor.

Deep down, we still sort of cling to our childhood theories about germs. We know germs are all around, idly loitering and standing by. When we drop a piece of bread, it falls like a war missile, startling the *istambay* germs and sending them scampering in all directions. The food remains safe for as long as the stunned germs don't regroup and swarm all over your food.

The safe period is of course arbitrary. A piece of lobster we might retrieve, but ice cream scoops we abandon even if it's Häägen Dazs. Five seconds on the floor of a public wet market we equate with 500 years on the gleaming marble floor of your rich *amiga*. Then, too, if your *amiga's* watching, you probably won't try to rescue the errant food on her floor.

While we only half-believe this theory of startled germs, many of us do tend to attribute human capabilities to germs. A few years back, one of my students submitted a term paper on children's perceptions of germs and there were amazing drawings showing how the germs (complete with startled faces and legs and arms flaying about) would scatter and regroup after being "bombed" by a piece of bread.

The SARS outbreak surfaces the worst of our fears of these human-like germs. I hear people fretting, "Oh, but the germs can travel in the air," making me imagine huge fleets of SARS viruses flying around, complete with capes like Superman.

Others are very specific, saying the SARS virus can "fly" a meter. This "one meter" figure, I realize, is a misinterpretation of the information coming from medical personnel. When doctors say the SARS virus can "travel" a meter, what they mean is that when someone with SARS coughs or sneezes, the virus-laden droplets can go as far as a meter.

In other words, it is not the virus travelling on its own. Viruses, as well as other types of germs, travel only as far and as fast as humans allow them to. When a patient with SARS coughs or sneezes, the droplets will travel varying distances—in medical jargon, people are sometimes described as having paroxysmal coughing, coughs so explosive that you can imagine the droplets landing in Moscow or Los Angeles. On the other hand, you have people with such dainty and demure sneezes that droplets probably go off two or three centimeters.

Note that even with the daintiest of sneezes, with the person politely covering his or her mouth, the droplets will end up on their hands and can be passed on to other people. This is why hand washing, on the part of patients as well as caregivers an[illegible]ts, remains one of the most important preventive measure against SARS and many other infectious diseases. Hand washing is effective because it breaks the human transmission routes for the germs.

Remember that wonderful television ad for an anti-fungal cream, showing an early morning scene in a home? As members of the family touch each other, they begin to itch, suggesting how the skin fungal infection spreads around. The last scene shows one of the kids affectionately petting the family dog, after which the poor pooch begins to desperately scratch away.

As ads go, there's hype involved here, but the blurb does show that you need people (and, occasionally, dogs and other animals) to move germs around. It's not surprising infectious diseases are usually dermatological (from contact with the skin), respiratory (passed around by droplets from sneezing and coughing) and gastrointestinal (passed around through contaminated hands, food, water).

Pinoy germs, at least in our minds, seem not only to travel a lot but also have scheming minds, plotting ways to attack people. Because of their anatomy, women feel particularly vulnerable, ever fearful of battalions of germs lurking around in nooks and crannies, especially in toilet bowls, waiting to ambush their victims. One of the terms we use to describe an infection—*kumakapit* —says it all, the germs not just pouncing on you but clinging on like spiderman scaling a skyscraper.

Unfortunately, we think of germs mainly in terms of our personal or individual vulnerability, easy prey for squadrons of germs. Given such concepts of germs, we try to defend ourselves by using cloth masks, and overdosing ourselves with vitamin C, antibiotics, Yakult, kimchi or whatever stuff is touted as having anti-SARS power. Filipinos are also notorious for carrying around bottles of alcohol in bags, packed together with our rosaries, an apt combination considering how alcohol is used as religiously as people deployed holy water in the past. This time of course, the objects of our exorcism are germs.

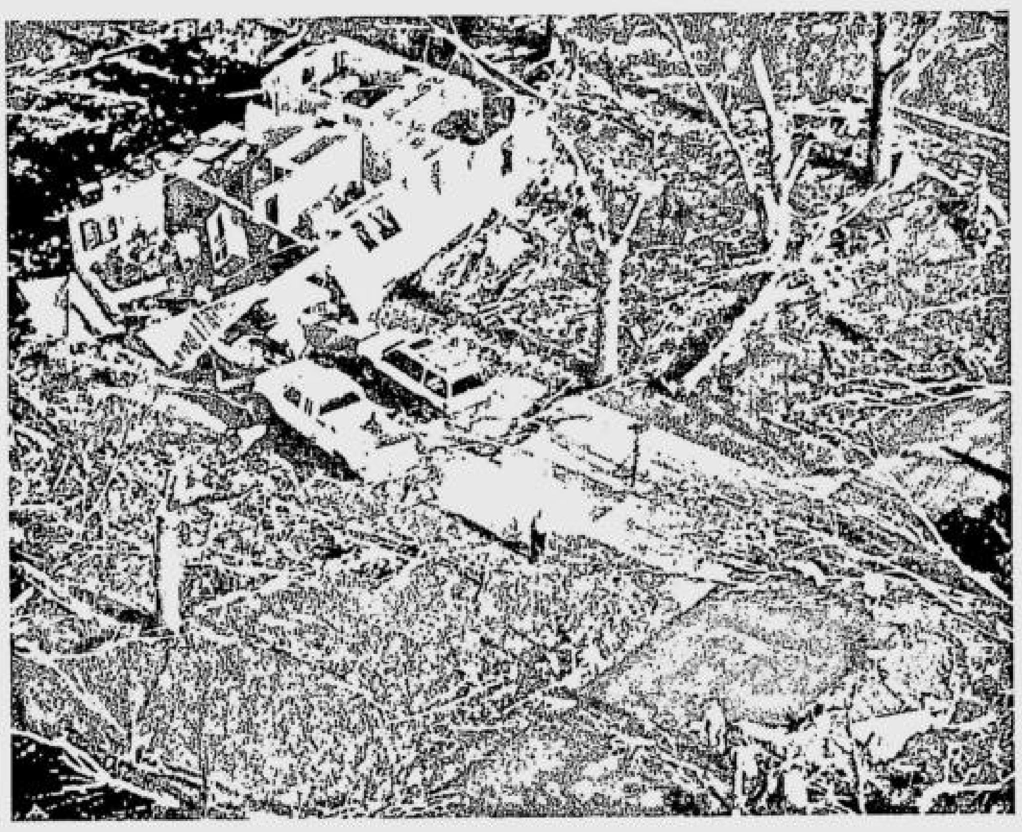
By fixating ourselves on individual vulnerability, we end up neglecting important public health measures that have to be implemented collectively. Just look at Congress, proposing that funds be allocated to buy respirators for themselves. Or look at the politicians who team up with drug companies to give away free vitamin C, thus gaining new gullible customers who will now believe vitamin C keeps them safe. At times I suspect the politicians intentionally give out vitamin C to divert people's attention from the more important reasons why germs thrive and spread: lack of clean water supplies, waste disposal systems and health education.

Is it really germs that are so brilliant, or are we looking at humans who choose not to be wiser?

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Twisters devastate US Midwest



TORNADO ALLEY. This aerial photo shows residents of western Kansas City, Kan., surveying damage to a home that was hit by a tornado Sunday afternoon, May 4. A powerful tornado hit the Midwest Sunday, flattening several buildings and killing at least 28 people as it left a swath of destruction a quarter-mile wide in some places. AP

28 people killed in area known as 'Tornado Alley'

PIERCE CITY, Missouri—A series of tornadoes and high winds pummeled the Midwest, killing an estimated 28 people in three states as storms left a swath of destruction 400 meters wide in some places.

In Missouri, Lawrence County Sheriff Doug Seneker estimated a dozen people were killed Sunday when a tornado careened through the southwest part of the state.

Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius declared seven counties disaster areas, and Missouri Gov. Bob Holden said the process was under way to declare disaster areas in his state.

Missouri officials told the National Guard to be ready to go to storm-damaged areas. Holden said the damage was "the worst I've seen from a tornado in several years."

One of the hardest hit areas appeared to be Pierce City, where about nine people were missing and feared dead inside a destroyed National Guard Armory where they had taken shelter. A Pierce City police officer described the downtown area as "wiped out," Seneker said.

Searchers accompanied by dogs were digging through the armory debris in hopes of finding the missing victims alive, but the brick-and-wood structure was unstable and the process was going slowly.

"They're hearing no signs of life, but they are still working to find them," said state Rep. Jack Goodman. He grew up in Pierce City and was there when the storm hit.

There was not a home or business in the town of nearly 1,400 residents untouched by the tornado. Trees were twisted, power lines were downed, and brick, glass and other debris made it impossible to walk the city streets.

Israel spurns Syria overture

JERUSALEM—Israel has rejected a Syrian offer to resume peace negotiations that was made in secret talks between Israeli businessmen and Syrian President Bashar Assad's brother, a source in the Israeli prime minister's office said on Monday.

The proposal was discussed in Jordan before the US-led war on Iraq, the daily newspaper Maariv said, but has only now been publicized. After careful analysis of it, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon questioned Syria's motives.

"It was decided that treatment of the matter would be delayed until Syria's true local and international situation becomes clear in the fallout of the Iraqi war," said the source.

The report of the failed talks came as US Assistant Secretary of State William Burns was preparing the ground for the most concerted international peace drive in the region since the US-brokered Camp David talks collapsed in mid-2000.

The Syrian offer, conveyed by Mahar Assad, would have involved mutual confidence-building steps alongside a renewal of negotiations.

Israeli-Syrian peace talks broke down in January 2000 over the future of the occupied Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war.

On Sunday, ahead of a regional visit by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, Syria said that Washington must push Israel to give up the land it seized in 1967, including the West Bank and Gaza.

Powell's trip will promote a US-backed proposal known as the "road map" which calls for an end to violence in the 31-month-old Palestinian uprising, a freeze in Jewish settlement expansion in the West Bank, and a Palestinian state by 2005.

Reuters

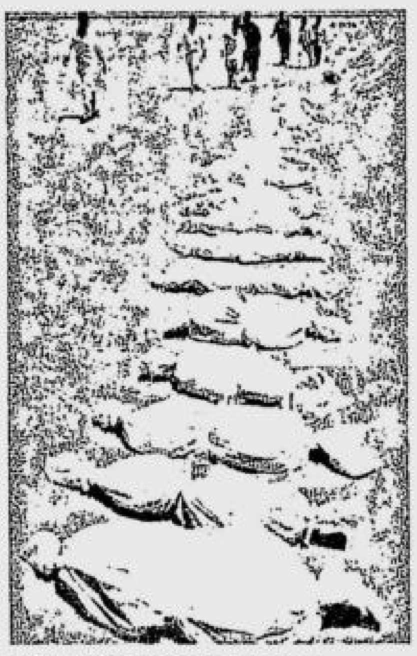
At least 9 Iraqis to run interim gov't—Garner

BAGHDAD—Up to nine Iraqis representing different opposition factions are to run an interim government to help rebuild the country in the coming months, US civil administrator Jay Garner told reporters Monday.

"I think what you may see is as many as seven, eight, nine leaders working together to provide leadership," said Garner, adding he did not know how the collective leadership would function specifically.

Garner said that group would likely be expanded to include a Christian and perhaps another Sunni figure.

AFP



THE REMAINS of bodies lay wrapped in white sheets at the site of a suspected mass grave. REUTERS

Mass graves proof of Saddam's brutality

BAGHDAD—Iraqis dug corpses from a mass grave on Sunday and police reappeared in Baghdad as Iraq grappled with the brutality of Saddam Hussein's rule and the lawless aftermath of the US-led invasion that ended it.

At a farmland site near the Shi'ite Muslim holy city of Najaf, Iraqis clawed through earth to uncover scores of bodies, some with blindfolds and hands tied, of men and women apparently executed during a 1991 Shi'ite uprising.

Tens of thousands of Shi'ites and Kurds are thought to have been killed when Saddam's forces crushed revolts after US-led forces drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War.

At the farm site near Najaf, Iraqis searching for missing friends and family found rotting clothes held together little more than skeletons or bones. Witnesses watched them being wrapped in white sheets and tagged with plastic identity cards.

By the end of the day, 47 bundles of remains had been reburied in unmarked graves.

"This is the tip of the iceberg in this country," said Captain Mike Urena, a US Marines civil affairs officer who visited a second site on Sunday and then turned it over to local Red Crescent authorities.

Reuters

Rumsfeld: We'll find Saddam

WASHINGTON—US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, fresh from an eight-nation trip after the US victory in Iraq, said on Sunday he was confident Saddam Hussein would be found if he is alive and his weapons of mass destruction uncovered.

Rumsfeld also said he thought the decisive US-led defeat of Saddam's government would serve as a powerful message to other nations with links to terrorism.

Rumsfeld said: "That was a demonstration to the world that an awful lot of countries don't think it's a good idea for countries to have weapons of mass destruction, or to be on the terrorist list, or to have relationships with terrorists."

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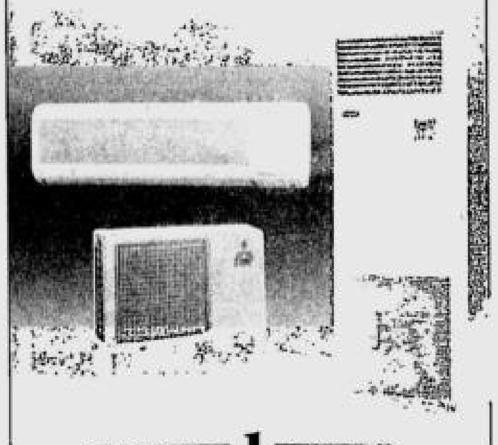

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Public warned not to believe SARS cures found on websites

PETALING JAYA—The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has warned the public over several websites professing cures for the deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome virus.

While scientists are still baffled over the origins of SARS, one site claimed that a method called Schlenzbathing was able to cure cancer and also victims of the epidemic.

The site said by artificially inducing a person's temperature to 40 degrees through hot baths and towel wraps, it would stimulate the body's defense mechanism and eradicate the SARS virus in the body.

Practitioners of Schlenzbathing believe that if a person develops fever, his immune systems would automatically go on overdrive to protect the body from falling ill.

Another site claimed that taking a supplement called Bioprotein-plus could thwart viral diseases even in the absence of high-powered antiviral prescription drugs.

Other possible cures circulating in cyberspace include consuming turnips, carrots, leeks, garlic, ginger, large doses of vitamins, dead silkworms and cicada skins.

MMA president Doctor N. Athimulam said these unorthodox methods were potentially harmful and could have dire effects on the body.

"All active ingredients produce certain adverse side effects if taken above certain quantity. For example, even vitamins, when taken in large amount can be harmful.

"All approved medicine used by doctors have a known toxic level derived scientifically. Such approved drugs are prescribed way below it's harmful level. Untested medicines and herbs can be potentially harmful because there is no such scientific data and control of use by qualified medical practitioners," he told The Star. Doctor Athimulam added that false hopes make consumers careless when dealing with the situation.

"They waste a lot of their money on products with false claims and they develop a false sense of security which will not be helpful in the Government's effort to prevent the spread of SARS.

"The public should not panic. It is unfortunate that some businessmen often take advantage of such situations to make money out of people's fear.

"The public should only listen to authoritative sources such as the Health Ministry and the World Health Organization," he said.

The Star of Malaysia/Asia News Network

DOLPHIN SHOW REUTERS

A boy watches a dolphin at a Tokyo aquarium on May 5, final day of the weeklong Golden Week holidays in Japan. Six dolphins are kept at the aquarium and four of them perform a "Dolphin Show" to attract visitors.

WORLDBRIEFS

Peace party in turmoil

SHARON

JERUSALEM—Dovish former Gen. Amram Mitzna has resigned as Israeli opposition leader, leaving Israel's veteran peace party in turmoil and left-wingers stranded even deeper in the political wilderness. While the once-powerful Labour Party pondered a future weakened by an electoral shift to the right caused by a Palestinian uprising for statehood, a US envoy planned further talks on Monday on pushing a new peace plan. Assistant Secretary of State William Burns, who met Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on Sunday, was to meet Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank. Burns is preparing the ground, ahead of a visit later this week by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, for the most concerted peace drive in the region since US-brokered talks collapsed in mid-2000. *Reuters*

Refugee in Mongolia

SEOUL—A resettlement town to accommodate as many as 300 North Korean defectors will soon open in Mongolia, a South Korean lawmaker said. "International civic and aid groups have been building the resettlement town for North Koreans who have fled their country," Rep. Hwang Woo-yea said in a recent interview with The Korea Herald. The nongovernmental groups participating in the project include Habitat for Humanity International, which promotes various campaigns across the world to build homes for the underprivileged and the Canaan Farmers' School, Rep. Hwang said. An aide to Rep. Hwang of the main opposition Grand National Party, who joined the interview, said about 70 percent of the construction work for the project has been completed.

The Korea Herald/Asia Network

Mahathir resumes work

MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR—Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who resumes work Monday after a two-month leave, has told civil servants not to keep on demanding higher salaries, saying this will make the country poor and raise the cost of living. He said civil servants should think not just about compensation or salaries, but in terms of job satisfaction and their contributions to national development. "They should also think of their contributions to make our country respected throughout the world, of their contributions toward making Malaysians proud of being Malaysians and recognized by the world for their success," he said in an exclusive interview with Khidmat (Service), the official magazine of the Malaysian civil service. The Prime Minister, who will step down in October, made the remarks when asked by the magazine for "parting advice" to the country's 900,000 civil servants.

The Star of Malaysia/Asia News Network

North Korea asks US

SEOUL—North Korea called on the United States not to obstruct economic investment in the North by South Korea and Japan when North Korean and US diplomatic officials held talks in Beijing last month, a senior Foreign Ministry official said yesterday. The official denied some media reports that the North asked for a US guarantee that Seoul and Tokyo will extend economic assistance to the impoverished state during the Beijing talks over the North's nuclear weapons development. "North Korea didn't call for Washington's assurance on that matter, they simply requested that the United States should not interrupt its economic cooperation projects with the South and Japan," he said on condition of anonymity.

The Korea Herald/Asia Network

Peaceful solution in Aceh

JAKARTA—Indonesia said on Monday it still wanted a peaceful solution for troubled Aceh province but separatist rebels were trying to coerce the government to cave in to their demands on the time and place for key peace talks. An aide to chief security minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said the separatist Free Aceh Movement (GAM) had suggested the two sides meet after May 12 in Geneva and had rejected government demands to hold the meeting this week in an Indonesian city. "This is coercion against us," Major Gen. Sudi Silalahi told reporters. "We are still open for options. However, if the meeting still can be held, it should occur immediately in Indonesia. Currently, we can't give in anymore." *Reuters*

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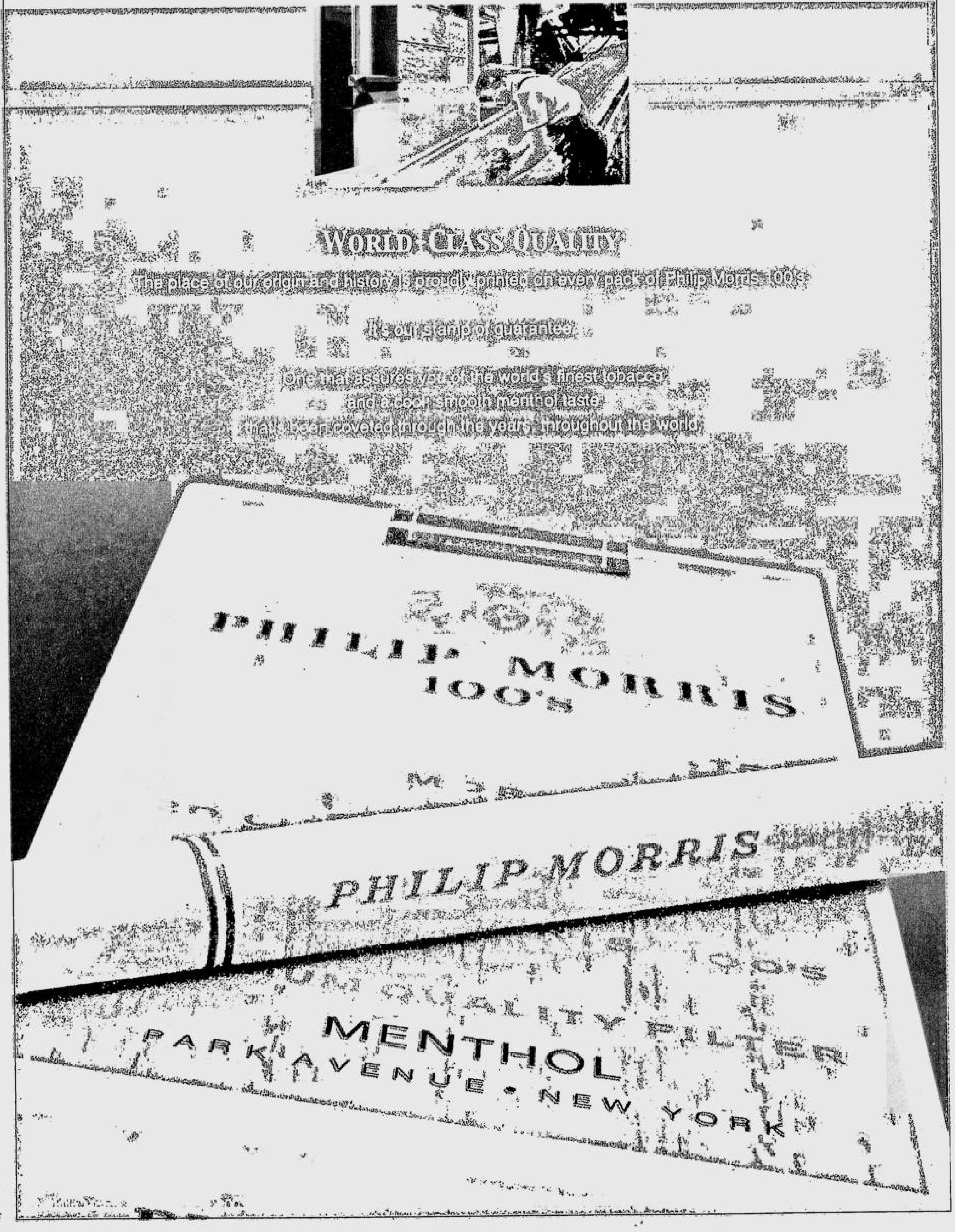

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GIANT PAPAYAS
A BANGLADESHI villager looks at a papaya tree growing near her home in northern Lalmonirhat 400 km (250 miles) from Dhaka. The woman began cultivating papaya trees with a loan from a local micro-credit group, the Rangpur-Dinajpur Rural Service, which offers credit to villagers in six districts in northern Bangladesh. REUTERS

Kashmiris feel hopeful , yet skeptical about peace

SRINAGAR, India—Tired of death and uncertainty, Kashmiris view the peace initiatives between rivals India and Pakistan with hope and apprehension.

India and Pakistan said last week they would hold their first talks in two years in an effort to end 50 years of war and acrimony between the nuclear neighbors. They will appoint new ambassadors and restore civil air links between the South Asian countries.

"We have been sandwiched between them since 1947. It is high time that a beginning is made to make our lives a little better," Ali Mohammad, a government employee, said in Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian Kashmir.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars over the beautiful and strategic Himalayan province since independence from Britain in 1947.

A separatist insurgency for independence or the merger of mostly Muslim Kashmir with Pakistan by Islamic rebels in India's part of Kashmir has left 61,000 dead, most of them civilians, since it began in 1989.

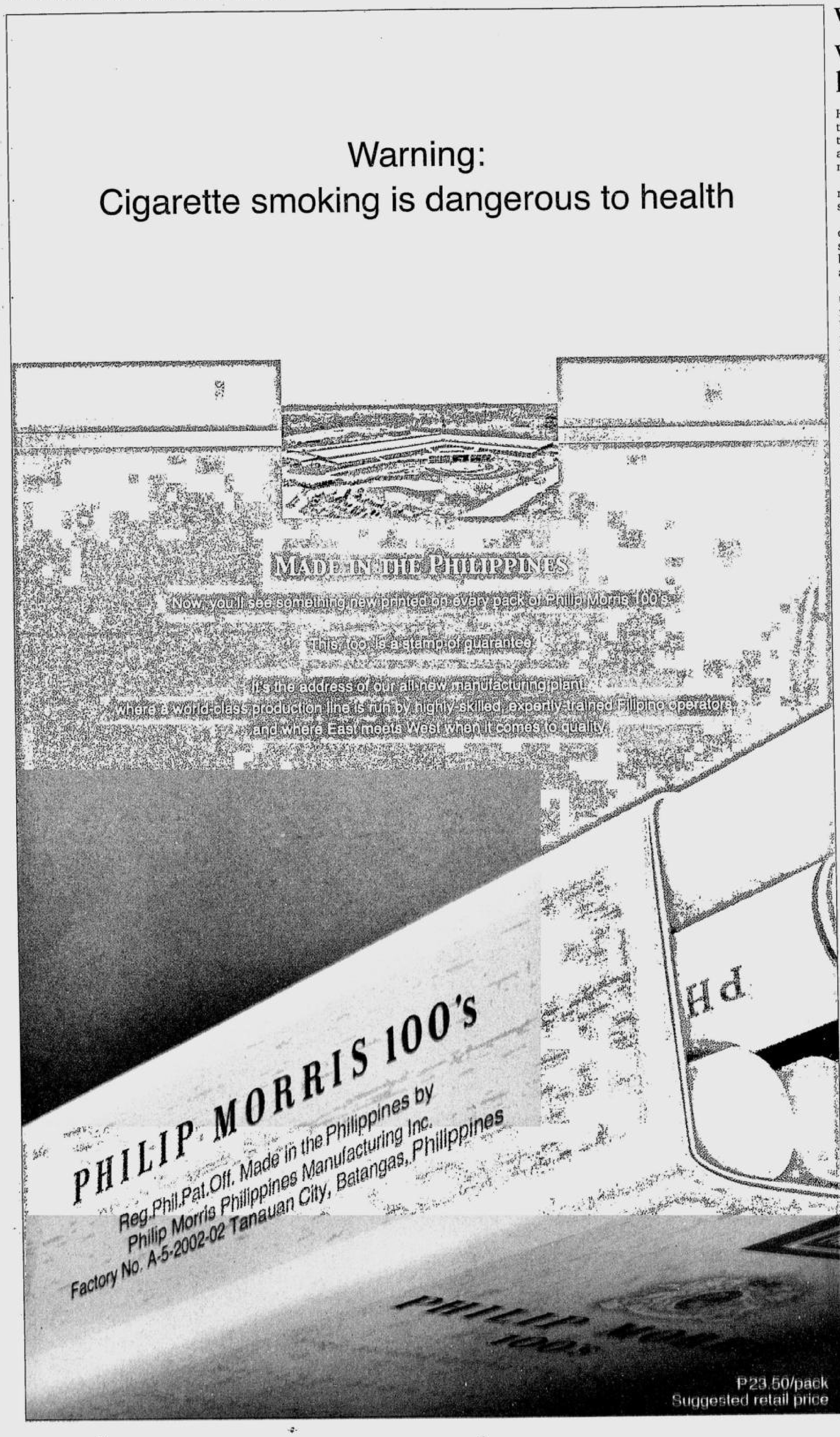
Last week, India and Pakistan announced they would hold talks to resolve all their issues, including Kashmir. The ground rules and dates have yet to be set.

"This time both countries are showing flexibility in their attitudes and it looks like a genuine start. We live in fear and danger, so any attempt to make our lives safer is welcome," said Inayat-Ullah, a 50-year-old Kashmiri school teacher.

Though many Kashmiris hope the latest initiatives may help bring peace to their violence-battered enclave, they also firmly believe any dialogue over Kashmir should involve Kashmiris.

"Unless we are a party to the dialogue and peace process, no solution can be found," said Ali Mohammad, 52, a government employee in Srinagar. "Previous talks have failed because all necessary parties were not part of the process."

Kashmir is the main source of friction between India and Pakistan. It has been divided between them by a so-called Line of Control since 1972. *AP*



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Vietnamese singers winning Japanese hearts and pockets

HO CHI MINH CITY—Talent scouts from a top Japanese entertainment company are on the lookout for promising Vietnamese singers as music-lovers in Japan tune in to Vietnamese songs in increasing numbers.

Japan's Watsu Studio is seeking Vietnamese artists to record albums and perform shows in both Japan and Vietnam.

Watsu director Jitsuhiro Nakata said his company was choosing young Vietnamese singers because love songs from Vietnam had become very popular among some Japanese audiences.

Well-known singer Hoàng Haïnh is among the Watsu performers who have made their mark in Japan, while three young singers, Myõ Linh, Myõ Taâm and Quang Duõng, the most recent additions to the Watsu stable, were also finding favor with audiences, Nakata said.

"We select singers who can perform in both Japanese and Vietnamese," he said.

"We plan to organize a live show for Hoàng Haïnh in HCM City and Haø Noäi this July and our company's Vietnamese newcomers will also attend the show as supporting artists," he said.

Watsu organized a solo performance for pop singer Hoàng Haïnh in Tokyo last month as part of a music programme to mark 30 years of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Japan.

Haïnh performed Vietnamese and Japanese songs with well-known Japanese saxophonist Hino Tenisama in front of 200 people at the Nikko Hotel.

Her performance of Vietnamese songs such as "Dieãm Xöa" (Dieãm, My Cherished Memory), "Tình Ca Cho Em" (The Love Song for You) and "Giaác Mô Tuyeät Vôøi" (Wonderful Dream) in Japanese, won a warm response from the audience. *Vietnam News Agency/Asia News Network*

Israeli policeman mistaken for stripper

JERUSALEM—An Israeli policeman responding to neighbors' complaints about a rowdy party. He received an unexpected welcome at the door when revelers mistook him for a stripper and began to take off his clothes and stroke him.

"The women had ordered a stripper dressed as a police officer," national police spokesperson Gil Kleiman said on Monday.

The policeman showed the women his badge but they thought it was part of the act. He was extricated only after his partner came up and vouched for his identity, Kleiman said.

"She took off my shirt and untied my shoelaces," the officer was quoted by the Yedioth Ahronoth daily as saying about one of the partygoers. "She started stroking me and called on her friends to join in." *Reuters*

A real caped crusader

LONDON— A masked and caped do-gooder has been sweeping through an English town, performing good deeds and scattering terrified bad guys, a local newspaper reported on Friday.

The Kent and Sussex Courier said it had received letters from "stunned residents" of the town of Tunbridge Wells, southeast of London, who saw the man in a brown mask and cape scare off hooligans and return a woman's dropped purse.

"To my great surprise," the paper quoted 21-year-old psychology student Ellen Neville as saying, "a masked man wearing a brown cape rushed past me to assist a woman who was having a bother with a group of youths.

"He swept in, broke up the commotion and ran off, leaving myself and the woman in a state of shock," she said.

A man wrote to say he was being chased by some youths when the hero appeared and "shocked the gang so much they ran off." Another woman wrote to say the crusader had tapped her on her shoulder to return her purse.

"If only there were more people around with this kind-hearted spirit," she said. *Reuters*

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GMA says roaches spread SARS, leads clean-up in dad's town

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

LUBAO, Pampanga—If the country must remain free of the deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus, even the lowly *ipis* (cockroach) must be eliminated.

President Macapagal-Arroyo drove home this point on Monday when she launched in Lubao, her father's hometown, the National Anti-SARS Consciousness Week.

During the launching, the President also confirmed that "CY," the second Filipina who died of SARS in Hong Kong, was from Pampanga.

Interviewed by the INQUIRER while she supervised the cleanup of the drainage system in Barangay Sta. Cruz, Ms Macapagal said cockroaches spread the SARS virus in an apartment building in Hong Kong where CY lived.

After conveying her condolences to CY's relatives in Mabalacat town, the President explained in Filipino: "The SARS virus spread in that building, affected one-third of the residents, because cockroaches thrived in the dirty sewage."

In her speech after the wreath-laying rites for the late Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos held some two hours earlier, Ms Macapagal also told more than 1,000 provincial capitol employees that cockroaches spread the SARS virus in that Hong Kong building, which she did not identify.

Cleanliness

"This is the proof that hygiene is important in preventing SARS. Dirtiness and filth produce SARS. Cleanliness prevents SARS," she said.

Reports said scientists had found that cockroaches and rats could spread SARS as traces of the virus were found in the roaches and rats' feet after laboratory tests done in China.

In Barangay Sta. Cruz, the President, whose highly visible sorties in the provinces led to rumors that she was not really dropping out of the presidential race in 2004, held a broomstick, sweeping garbage near the drainage. On the side, she commanded the .clean-up brigade to haul every trash out of the canal. It took her almost an hour supervising the clean-up drive, which she said she wanted to be thorough.

Explaining why she took a hands-on role in the campaign, she said in Filipino: "Cleanliness is very important. This is the best way to show the connection between cleanliness and health."

"Cleanliness cannot be taught through discourse. It can be learned by demonstration," she added.

Ms Macapagal said she expected that her clean-up drive would be done throughout the country.

Dozens of residents huddled around the President, with many simply watching her. Some old women were amazed that the President would go this far and exert such efforts to emphasize the need for hygiene.

Budget

Ms Macapagal said each local government unit was expected to have a budget for the project. "Cleanliness is part of each one's budget, *dapat*," she said.

According to her, the SARS problem should even be "more significant" to Pampanga because of CY's death.

Mabalacat Vice Mayor Prospero Lagman and Dr. Ethelyn Nieto, Central Luzon director of the Department of Health, said the remains of CY would be cremated in Hong Kong.

Lagman said CY's relatives were not planning to take home her ashes to Mabalacat as a preventive measure against SARS.

CY's sister, who works in a law firm in Angeles City, declined an interview. Her relatives in Mabalacat had padlocked their home, shooing away reporters who sought interviews.

An INQUIRER source reported seeing a man holding a golf club in front of the family's house to ward off reporters.

Rumors about SARS has led to discrimination against relatives or even just village mates of people who had manifested symptoms of the disease.

More Visayas schools set to increase fees, tuition

By N. P. Burgos Jr. and J. A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Half of private schools in Western Visayas and six in Eastern Visayas will increase tuition this coming school year, data from the regional office of the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) showed.

Thirty-five of the 72 private schools in Western Visayas, or 49 percent, will raise their fees by an average of 10.78 percent or P28.19 per unit. The highest rate for undergraduate courses will reach P396 per unit while lowest is at P177.10 per unit.

Last school year 61 percent of private schools in the region increased their tuition by an average of 13.5 percent.

Eighteen schools will increase their tuition in Iloilo, while in Negros Oriental, 13 schools will increase fees.

Two schools each in Capiz and Aklan will also raise tuition.

Freddie C. Maningo, tuition coordinator of the CHEd regional office, said the commission has no authority to stop the increases as long as the schools comply with requirements like the holding of consultations with representatives of the faculty, employees, students and parents.

In Eastern Visayas, six private colleges have informed the regional office of the CHEd of their intention to increase tuition by 10 percent.

Ciriaco Sabino, CHEd-8 education supervisor, said the private colleges that will increase tuition are the Science and Technology Institute (STI) for both its Tacloban and Ormoc campuses; Samar College and St. Mary's College, both in Catbalogan, Samar; St. Joseph College in Maasin City; and St. Peter's College in Ormoc city.

All have applied for a 10 percent increase, which will take effect in June for the next opening of classes, Sabino said.

Last school year, eight of the region's 76 private colleges applied for a tuition increase. These included the three that are raising fees for the coming the school year—STI, Samar College and St. Joseph College.

Justification

Sabino said that like in the previous years, the management of these schools cited the demand of their teaching force and personnel for a salary increase and improvement or rehabilitation of school facilities as reasons for the increase.

With the increase, STI will become the most expensive school in the region. The said computer school asked for P365 per unit in the last school year. Over the same period, each unit at Samar College cost P185; St. Mary, P175; SPC—P272.50 and St. Joseph's College, P175.

Militant youth and student groups in Western Visayas said the CHEd has become "an instrument of profit-hungry schools."

SKILLS UPGRADE
A Filipino soldier learns to assemble a high-powered rifle from an American trainer as part of ongoing military exercises that allows Filipino troops to upgrade skills in armed combat. GETTY IMAGES

Duterte dares Pala to confront him on slay try

DAVAO CITY—Mayor Rodrigo Duterte gave radio broadcaster Juan Porras Pala, a staunch anti-communist, three avenues to truth and justice if the broadcaster believed that Duterte was behind his ambush last week.

Duterte told reporters here that Pala could either go to court, seek an investigation by an independent body of the attempted assassination or confront the mayor.

During his "Gikan sa Masa Para sa Masa" television program on Sunday, Duterte said, "he suspected me of being the mastermind, I'll offer myself to him."

Two days after the failed assassination, Pala was back on air in his radio program and continued attacking Duterte. During his radio program, Pala dropped broad hints that Duterte had something to do with the ambush, which wounded him in the left buttock.

His driver and three bodyguards were unharmed in the attack.

But there are speculations that the assassination attempt on Pala was one that was planned by the anti-communist advocate himself.

Talks were also rife that there was an accidental fire inside the taxi that hit Pala's buttock. It was a second attempt on Pala's life. The first was made on June 14, 2001.

But Duterte said he did not want Pala dead because the people of Davao needed entertainment because Pala was making a fool of himself in his radio program.

"You need Pala for amusement. We will lose someone to laugh at," he said. *Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

PNOC plans new Visayas power plant

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Philippine National Oil Company-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) is now preparing to construct an additional 20-megawatt modular power plant at its geothermal drilling site in Nasuji, Valencia, to meet the growing demand for power in the Visayas.

The project dubbed as Palinpinon 11 optimization plant will be built at a cost of P1.6 billion. It will use the existing excess steam supply of 15.7 MW in Barangay Nasuji, according to sources at the PNOC-EDC.

Pal 11 is currently generating some 80 MW. Pal 1 generates 112.7 MW.

The 192.7 MW geothermal power currently generated by Pal 1 and Pal 11 is being distributed to the different provinces in the Visayas.

The project is designed to meet the 9.8 percent projected increase in power demand in the Visayas annually, beginning this year, according to the forecast made by the National Power Corp.

The project was already endorsed by the Regional Development Council (RDC) of Central Visayas to the National Economic Development Authority-Investment Coordination Committee (NEDA-ICC). The NEDA-ICC's endorsement of the project is one of the requirements for the granting of loan by the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).

About 86 percent of the project cost is to be funded by a loan from DBP while the remaining amount will be shouldered by PNOC-EDC. *Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Mountaineers seek break for Oriental Mindoro peak

CALAPAN CITY—The Halcon Mountaineers Inc. (Halms) has proposed to the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Tourism Council and the Municipality of Baco a "healing period" for Mt. Halcon, which, it said, the mountain needs to avoid the widening and destruction of its trails.

Mt. Halcon is in Baco town in Oriental Mindoro.

The Halms suggested that the next climb be held in January with a maximum of 10 people per month to prevent further damage to the mountain.

Since March, at least 600 climbers have gone up the mountain.

According to Sangguniang Panlalawigan board member Ligorio Turano, indigenous peoples committee chair, Mangyans have been complaining about the big number of climbers.

The Halms was even surprised by this year's Mount Halcon annual climb with 336 participants, about 35 percent of which were women. The club, which hosted the climb, expected only 200.

The annual climb normally takes four days (from Holy Wednesday to Saturday).

Two days are consumed in going up and another two days, in going down.

An overnight is spent enjoying what is officially considered the third highest peak in the country estimated at 2,587 meters.

In the recent climb, when everybody was expected to be in Camp 1 at 5:30 p.m. on Day 1, it was only at 11:30 p.m. that all got in, according to a Halms employee.

Halms members said they would collect abandoned garbage on a follow-up climb this month if it wouldn't rain.

"We were able to bring down about 30 kilos of wastes during the Holy Week," said Halms president Renato Tobillo.

Their sweeper brought down another five kilos of garbage.

"Some climb the peak to show off youth and strength. Especially in Manila, it's a big thing when you say that you have climbed Mount Halcon," he said. *Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

LACK of funds, or the misuse of them, forced the Navy to innovate, converting a US Navy boat into its latest pride, a combat vessel capable of speeds of up to 26 knots. PDI PHOTO/PDI MINDANAO

Navy boasts of faster, new combat craft

DAVAO CITY—The Philippine Navy has a new and faster sea craft that will be used to patrol the gulf between Davao City and the Island Garden City of Samal to guard against terrorism.

The Philippine Navy based in Capt. Feranil Pier Naval Station in Panacan District here on Saturday presented its newest vessel.

Navy commander Capt. Edsel Lumawag said the new VU-471 sea craft was made in the Philippines.

He said the original structure of the vessel was meant for lakes and shallow bodies of water and was in use by the US Navy.

But due to lack of funds, the Philippine Navy improvised the vessel and turned it into a combat vessel that can be used on all water surfaces.

The all-metal 46-feet long, jet-propelled vessel boasts of a 29-knot maximum speed. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

3 die in mishap

TAGBILARAN CITY—Three persons were killed while four others were wounded in a vehicular accident along the national highway in Barangay Bonbon, Calape, almost 40 kilometers from Tagbilaran City, after attending the fiesta in this city on Thursday evening. A one-and-a-half-year-old boy was saved. Police identified the fatalities as Rommel Labrador, 27, the driver; Ivy Labrador, 25; and Crisna Rosco, 29, all residents of Tubigon, the town next to Calape. The victims were riding a Tamaraw FX that turned turtle when it tried to avoid hitting another vehicle.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

4 docs found guilty

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Court of Appeals has upheld its earlier judgment reversing the decision of the Ombudsman Visayas that found four doctors and the supply officer of the Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital guilty of graft for putting up a cooperative-run pharmacy that competed with the hospital-run drugstore. The Visayas Ombudsman ordered in March 2001 the suspension for six months of Doctors Teresito Orbeta, Wevina E. Fuentes, Feliz Sy and Zenaida T. Jusep, and supply officer Vincent Padayhag, after finding them liable of conflict of interest, as they were officers of the hospital's credit cooperative. The Ombudsman acted on the complaint filed by former provincial officials led by then vice governor Edgar Teves.

Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

13 firms shut down

LEGAZPI CITY—At least 13 establishments in Bicol shut down and retrenched hundreds of workers, during the first quarter of this year. Glenda Manalo, regional director of the Department of Labor and Employment, said Camarines Sur has the biggest number of retrenched workers with at least 127 employees as companies went out of business due to financial losses. In 2002, 492 establishments had closed either because they had completed their projects or because of the economic crisis.

Michael B. Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Hijacked truck found

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group here has recovered the Isuzu truck reported to have been hijacked in Metro Manila on Wednesday. The truck, with license plate CSU-217, was found abandoned and empty on Quezon Road in San Simon town. The truck, owned by one Basilio Torres, was loaded with P5.2 million worth of cigarettes when armed men hijacked it. The truck's driver, Anselmo Oreganes, and helper Ronell Revilla are missing.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Wanted man arrested

LUCENA CITY—One of the most wanted criminals in Quezon province was arrested on Thursday in Barangay Balat-Atis in San Antonio, Quezon. Teodoro Pana, 40, resident of Barangay Puri, San Antonio, is the primary suspect in a murder case and a series of robbery-holdups in Southern Tagalog. He was last reported to have robbed the Rural Bank of Mataas Na Kahoy in Padre Garcia, Batangas.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Measures vs SARS

THE PROVINCIAL health officer of Oriental Mindoro with the help of two private physicians, has formed a Local Quarantine and Surveillance Team to monitor possible SARS carriers, especially among tourists. In Legazpi City, health authorities have put up an outpatient department at the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital exclusively for suspected SARS carriers who wish to be checked. Hospital officials here said they have trained personnel armed with gas masks and other equipment to attend to the needs of suspected SARS patients. *Madonna Virola and Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Jail guards probed

CAMP MELCHOR DELA CRUZ, Isabela—Police officials in Kalinga have ordered the investigation of five provincial jail guards in Tabuk town after 10 inmates escaped on Friday. Supt. Paul Mascariñas, Kalinga police director, said some of the inmates sawed off their cell's iron bars, seized a .45-cal. pistol and at gunpoint, ordered the guard on duty, Marcelo Gunnaban, to open the cells of the other escapees. The inmates also took off the guards' M-16 Armalite rifle and three shotguns. Mascariñas said jail guards Gunnaban, Paul Bunatao, Jessie Bungabong, Rodrigo Cortez and Durante Paday are being investigated for the escape. Arrested immediately after the jailbreak were Arman Wandas, the group's leader, Eric Casing and Franklin Asbungan. Six other inmates remain at large. They are facing charges of robbery in band, rape, frustrated murder and illegal possession of firearms.

Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Robbers in cop uniforms

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Six armed men wearing police uniforms robbed a man and took his car here on Friday. Supt. Elvis Diaz, acting city police chief, said the victim, Rizaldy Santiago, 31, told police that the armed men took his silver Honda CRV and robbed him at 2 a.m. Friday in Barangay San Agustin. He said the suspects blocked his path and announced the robbery at gunpoint. Santiago said the suspects took him to nearby Bacolor town and ordered him to take his clothes off. The suspects then left Santiago naked near the FVR Megadike. *Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Scores hurt in melee

TARLAC CITY—Scores of cockfight aficionados were hurt when a stampede ensued after a shootout between a retired Army colonel and another man inside a cockpit arena here on Sunday, a police report said. Senior Supt. Richard Wong, Tarlac City police operations chief, said Sergio Canapi, barangay captain of San Miguel here, was hit by a bullet in the left leg. Dozens of people were taken to nearby clinics for treatment of bruises, Wong said. The stampede happened at 12:35 a.m. when Max Roxas, whom Wong identified as a relative of a suspected jueteng operator in Paniqui town, fired at retired police Col. Francisco Casintahan.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

2004 OPTIONS

Imelda says RP needs another Marcos

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Another Ferdinand Marcos as the country's ruler?

The proposition is sure to elicit loud protests from groups and individuals who had fought the dictatorship of the late strongman but to Marcos' widow, Imelda, iron hand rule is what Filipinos need now.

Speaking here on Friday, Mrs. Marcos said she hoped the next President would be like Marcos so the country's peace and order problems would be solved and the economy could improve.

"The country needs a president like Marcos who was so loyal to the mythology of Malakas. He proclaimed Martial Law to have a *lakas*. He used the *lakas* for peace and not for war. He terminated the Mindanao war. He did not send a combat force in Vietnam but just an engineering battalion," Mrs. Marcos said.

"And I pray that the spirit of Marcos will come back. He anchored his laws on nature . . . on the law of God. He gave his endless and selfless love to the country," she added.

Mrs. Marcos, however, would not say who among the possible presidential contenders has qualities like her late husband, who, along with her, was charged with systematically looting the country's coffers during his 20-year reign.

She told the INQUIRER that this was not yet the time to announce her choice for president in the 2004 elections.

But former Leyte Rep. Sergio Apostol, now chair of the Philippine National Oil Company, said Mrs. Marcos was inclined to support the presidential bid of opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

"Imelda is supporting the presidential ambition of Ping Lacson," said Apostol, regional chair of the ruling Lakas-NUCD.

Lacson was the Philippine National Police chief under the short-lived presidency of Joseph Estrada, who had staunchly supported Marcos in the past.

The United Opposition has named Lacson as one of the group's possible contenders for the 2004 presidential election.

The group was reportedly wooing Mrs. Marcos' elder daughter, Ilocos Rep. Imee Marcos, as a senatorial candidate.

Mrs. Marcos said her daughter has the qualities to run for the Senate.

"She really has a good potential. She is intelligent. She was a Princeton student. She is a very studious girl and of course, she loves her country more than her own self and that is something," said the dictator's widow.

Mrs. Marcos was here last week to grace the 25th anniversary of the National Maritime Polytechnic in Barangay Cabalawan.

During the affair, the disgraced first lady sat beside a stoic Vice President Teofisto Guingona who was one of the fiercest critics of her husband's regime and was one of the hundreds who were jailed by the dictator.

The former first lady said she has no plans to run for president in next year's elections.

"I have already reached a certain level of clout in Philippine politics," she said. "I have more credibility even without being in politics."

Mrs. Marcos ran but landed in the bottom of the race in the 1992 presidential elections, which Fidel Ramos won amid charges of cheating hurled by Ramos' closest rival, Miriam Defensor Santiago.

Mrs. Marcos also ran for President in the 1998 elections but she withdrew her candidacy and instead supported Estrada, who was then considered unbeatable.

Estrada eventually won by a landslide but his tenure in office was quickly loosened on charges of corruption.

HEALTH workers, like this masked woman in a Baguio City health clinic, try to spread the right information on **SARS** as a means to fight the baseless rumors that stick to the disease.

REUTERS

Tribes turn to the gods vs diseases

By Estanislao Caldez
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TUGUEGARAO CITY—The native Ibanags and Itawes here have different ways of dealing with epidemics. When fears of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) start spreading in the country, they turn to "special" saints, prayers and rituals.

Among the saints whom Ibanags turn to is San Roque, the patron saint for calamities, drought and epidemics. Images of San Roque are also found side by side with the villages' patron saints to protect villagers from harm.

During the Spanish colonization, friars taught Ibanags that San Roque was the refuge of those afflicted with various diseases in Cagayan.

The people would pray the novena for nine days and on the ninth day, they held processions and public prayers and sang religious songs such as the Goso To San Roque and Mangurug (the Apostles' Creed).

Ibanags believe that singing the Mangurug would drive evil spirits away, provide calm during thunder and protection during outbreak of epidemics.

Older Ibanags believe that epidemics are God's ways of punishing people for their evil ways and reminding them to change.

During typhoons, Ibanag families sing the Mangurug.

Aside from the processions, Ibanags hang coconut fronds (*bendita*), which are blessed during Palm Sunday, on their doors and burn incense after praying the Angelus.

They smoke their houses with burned incense and coconut fronds to drive away evil spirits that they believe cause epidemics.

Older Ibanags believe that wars, earthquakes and even SARS are God's ways of showing His displeasure over man's sins.

Msgr. Rodolfo Beltran, parish priest here, urged Cagayanos to pray the rosary.

OFW with diabetes quarantined amid SARS fears

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—An overseas Filipino worker who returned from Taiwan was placed under quarantine yesterday at the isolation room of the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC) in this city.

But the Department of Health said the 40-year-old woman has not shown symptoms of the dreaded Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

"She is not (considered) a SARS case. She does not have cough, fever or pneumonia. But we decided to confine and placed her at the isolation room of the EVRMC just to make sure and allay the fears of the people," said Mila Bacho-Bacus, DOH director for Eastern Visayas.

She said that based on the diagnosis of the EVRMC doctors, the woman is suffering from diabetes.

The DOH does not know when she arrived from Taiwan. But she came home in Tacloban from Manila on April 26. She and her family live in one of the city's subdivisions.

Based on the fact sheet she handed to the DOH personnel at the Daniel Z. Romualdez (DZR) Airport, the woman worked as a midwife in one of the hospitals in Taiwan, one of the Asian countries where SARS cases are high.

All passengers are asked to answer a checklist upon their arrival at the DZR Airport as part of the government's campaign against SARS.

Bacus said the woman went to a private hospital in the city after she had difficulty breathing. The doctor, in turn, called up Bacus to inform her about the woman's condition.

She, however, did not say when and where the patient had her medical-checkup.

But the attending physician reportedly panicked when he assumed that the woman's shortness of breath may be due to SARS.

Among the symptoms of SARS are high fever, pneumonia, cough and difficulty in breathing.

But in the woman's case, Bacus said the OFW had difficulty breathing because of her diabetes and not because of SARS.

Still, she added, they decided to confine her in the isolation room of the EVRMC, the biggest hospital in Eastern Visayas, which has been designated as a SARS center.

Bacus said they had to confine the woman because rumors were spreading like wildfire that she carried the SARS virus.

"Her presence is already sowing fear and anxiety among our people. So we have decided to temporarily confine her at the EVRMC," she said.

Bacus said the woman was willing to be confined for her own protection.

Residents here were gripped with fear last month when an OFW who returned from Hong Kong was said to have exhibited symptoms of SARS.

Guingona plays coy on decision to run for president or VP

By Vicente S. Labro
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Vice President Teofisto Guingona may have rated high in a survey by the Ibon Foundation as a possible vice presidential or presidential candidate, but he remains undecided whether to run in next year's elections.

"I will make my decision in two or three month's time," he told the INQUIRER in a press conference here recently.

In a survey conducted by Ibon on March 17 to 27, Guingona rated 18.07 percent, next to Sen. Loren Legarda, as favored contenders for vice president.

He was also included in the top 10 presidential preferences in Metro Manila, according to the same Ibon survey that the foundation's research and data bank department conducts quarterly.

Guingona said his decision whether to run again in 2004 will be known in two or three months, "because at that time the moment of truth shall arrive and we have to face the truth."

Guingona, chosen by President Macapagal to be vice president after Estrada's ouster, said the convention will be in December or January next year, "but that may be too late as things are developing now."

"I think we will have to accelerate that to June or July," he added.

Ebdane orders arrest of cop in journalist's slay

PAGADIAN CITY—Pressure from various local and international media organizations has prompted the leadership of the Philippine National Police to issue a directive to arrest the killer of a crusading journalist here.

"Get Damalerio's killer," was the directive issued by PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane to Chief Supt. Reynaldo Varilla, newly installed police director for Western Mindanao.

On May 13 last year, journalist Edgar Damalerio was murdered a few blocks away from the city police headquarters here. Two witnesses tagged PO1 Guillermo Wapile, assigned to the city police intelligence section here, as the gunman.

Damalerio was managing editor of weekly newspaper The Zamboanga Scribe and commentator of radio station dxKP.

Ebdane, in his directive issued by the office of Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil of the PNP Public Information Office, ordered Varilla to "intensify the manhunt operations for the immediate arrest of Wapile."

In response to Ebdane's directive, Varilla vowed to "track down the suspect and bring him before the bar of justice." The directive came after the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists (FFFJ) and the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists protested inaction on the case.

The FFFJ is composed of the Philippine Press Institute, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, the Center for Community Journalism and Development, and the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas.

The slain journalist's widow, Gemma, has filed criminal and administrative charges against Senior Supt. Pedrito Reyes, former police provincial director of Zamboanga del Sur.

Reyes was asked by a local court here to be Wapile's custodian when the suspect escaped two days before the court issued a warrant of arrest on Jan. 29 this year.

On April 3, FFFJ wrote a letter to the PNP leadership pressing for the resolution of Damalerio's murder and the punishment of police officials who tried to cover up the case. *Hernan P. dela Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DAMALERIO

₱50-M bounty for Salamat, key MILF leaders

From page A1

does not mean a total war.

Dureza said the peace talks with the MILF "will remain in the same mode." Malacañang will make an announcement about this weekend's exploratory talks soon, he added.

More hostages

First Infantry Division commander Brig. Gen. Trifonio Salazar flew in to Siocon to direct the pursuit operations.

"A pursuit is going on. They are using the hostages as human shields, but we have deployed soldiers to the area. They are on the run in the hinterlands," Salazar told reporters.

As of 10 a.m. yesterday, Salazar said 66 hostages had been rescued or escaped, but there were still more hostages in the hands of the rebels.

"They are now holding more hostages than initially suspected," Salazar said, adding that freed hostages had claimed having seen as many as 30 people in captivity. The report could not be independently confirmed. But Councilor Constantino Soriano, brother of Siocon Mayor Cesar Soriano, claimed there could be as many as 50 to 60 hostages in captivity.

Salazar said the rebels were taking hostages as they flee. "That's the reason why the number keeps increasing while we pursue them."

"It's some kind of release-pick up hostages situation," he said.

Mayor Soriano, whose wife and daughters were erroneously reported as having been temporarily abducted, said the MILF rebels stole into Siocon in batches over the weekend, as residents celebrated the town fiesta.

They then attacked the municipal hall and the local police and army headquarters before dawn Sunday and razed the central public market.

"We didn't know this could happen to us," Soriano said over dzMM radio in Manila, as he appealed for help from the national government.

Out of hand?

MILF officials said the civilian casualties were regrettable. "We are distressed by the Siocon incident," Gazzali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, told the INQUIRER.

"It was an attack against government troops but went out of hand," the apologetic Jaafar said.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said the attack was part of the MILF's "active defense posture" in the face of a continuing military offensive.

"We are trying to avoid these collateral damages, but it's difficult to avoid because the civilians are mixed with the military in the same area," Kabalu said.

"There were civilian casualties because the fighting spilled over in other parts of the town," he also told Agence France Presse by telephone.

Sunday's attack was in retaliation for a military offensive in February that led to the fall of a major MILF camp in the Buliok complex, he said. Kabalu warned of more attacks if the military did not pull out of Buliok and if the government did not drop murder charges against MILF leaders for the recent bombings of an airport and wharf that killed nearly 40 in the South.

In Siocon, dozens of villagers were seen huddled and sobbing in a community center as men sifted through the smoldering rubble of the public market.

Public buildings were pockmarked by bullets and one large hole, possibly made by a mortar, could be seen on the mayor's office.

Mayor Soriano said his town of 50,000 people was struggling to recover from the attack.

"We didn't know this could happen to us," Soriano said. "This is very tragic."

"If you can see the faces of our people here, even in the streets they are crying and you cannot help but feel very sad," he said in a radio interview. "I don't know how we can start again in the face of all these problems and tensions and the continuing threats."

Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, AFP spokesperson, said Siocon residents were also beginning to evacuate their homes for fear of further attacks.

"There is still fear. The people of Siocon are in a state of shock," he said.

The President condemned the attack on the predominantly Christian mining town of Siocon as an act of terrorism.

President Macapagal-Arroyo demanded that the MILF hand over the attackers to the government ahead of peace talks planned in nearby Malaysia this week.

"We will go after the perpetrators and the MILF must turn over to the government, without excuses, the perpetrators," Ms Macapagal told reporters.

"We will not compromise against terrorism. We will pursue them wherever they flee. They will not find any sanctuary here or in any other land."

The President denounced the attack on Siocon, which she described as a "civilian community," as an "act of terrorism" that "cannot be construed in the furtherance of rebellion."

"The MILF leadership has to account for this act, both on the ground and on the level of peace negotiations," she said. "I have instructed our negotiators to raise this issue and demand from the MILF a full renunciation of terrorism in the pursuit of its political ends."

In another incident on Sunday, the MILF ambushed three military trucks carrying soldiers' wives and children in Matanog town, officials said. Two soldiers and another soldier's wife were wounded and three guerrillas were killed.

On Saturday, in Pikit, North Cotabato, MILF rebels fired M-79 grenades toward Fort Pikit, but no one was reported injured. A grenade landed some 15 meters from the Pikit police station.

In Kabacan town, MILF guerrillas harassed a military detachment in Barangay Katidtuan on Sunday morning but were repulsed.

Three MILF fighters were killed when the Army's 39th Infantry Battalion countered with assault rifles and machine guns to advancing rebels who were looking for food provisions from farmers. *With reports from Carlito Pablo; Martin Marfil; Reuters, AP, AFP; Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

2 seminarians among MILF victims

SIOCON, Zamboanga del Norte—Ever since he was a young boy, he had been fascinated by soutane-wearing priests distributing Holy Communion. His dream was to become one of them.

"And we thought he would really become one," Mario Buagas said. He was referring to his eldest son, Rhubi Mar, a seminarian, who was among those killed in Sunday's raid by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Another seminarian, Marino Acedo, was also killed. A friend of theirs, Claudie Calumba, was wounded.

Rhubi Mar, his father said, had just graduated from Saint Vincent's College in Dipolog City and was planning to take up Theology at the University of Santo Tomas.

"He was a thoughtful son and loving brother to his younger brothers and sisters," Mario narrated.

Mario said because they were poor, Rhubi Mar always encouraged his brothers and sisters to be serious with their studies so that they could earn a degree.

"He was a man of peace," Father Mamert Dollera, Siocon parish priest, said.

The seminarians stayed at the parish center during the summer vacation.

The Diocese of Dipolog and Bishop Jose Manguiran mourned the death of the seminarians, Dollera said.

"We mourn their loss. While we believe that Rhubi Mar and Marino are already in the hands of God, we pray that peace may be achieved by a country so divided," he said.

Mario said his son and Marino will be buried together in their hometown in Labason.

"They were buddies since their first year," he said. *Lullie A. Micabalo, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

MILF close to being tagged a terrorist group, says Reyes

By Martin Marfil

THE MILF raid on Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, has brought government one step closer to declaring the Moro Islamic Liberation Front a "terrorist" organization—putting the peace talks in peril.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said yesterday the question of the MILF's classification would be taken up in Malacañang.

"I'm certain that's one of the things that would be taken up ... There is a limit to (our) patience and tolerance," Reyes said.

The Cabinet oversight committee met yesterday afternoon, and agreed to take "punitive action" against the "perpetrators" of the Siocon attack.

"The President has directed that the perpetrators of this crime against the hapless people of Siocon will be dealt with harshly and severely. We will not let this crime go unpunished, so she has directed that we go and enforce the law," Reyes said at a press briefing.

In the same forum, Reyes said that despite the attack, peace talks with the MILF will continue.

"The government strategy is always ... to keep the door open as long as possible to a negotiated peaceful settlement of the conflict because the second track, which is the military operation, will continue. Even as we talk, we will continue pursuing and hunting down these perpetrators," he said.

Mabalacat mayor opposes burial of SARS fatality

HONG KONG—A 57-year-old Filipino woman who died of SARS will be cremated in Hong Kong and her ashes will be sent home for burial to avoid difficulties returning the body, Philippine Consul General Victoria S. Bataclan yesterday said.

In Manila, however, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas sought the help of health authorities to enlighten and persuade the mayor of Mabalacat, Pampanga, into allowing the burial of the second Filipino to be killed by SARS—identified only as CY.

"People here have the wrong notion that the SARS virus will survive in ashes even if it has been subjected to 2,000 degrees Centigrade of heat," Sto. Tomas told reporters. "In that degree of heat, nothing will survive—not even the SARS virus."

She decried as "very unfair" the mayor's refusal to have the woman's ashes buried in any cemetery in her hometown. "The problem is we're all proceeding from the absence of clear information. We should step up an information drive on the matter," she added.

Sto. Tomas said Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit had promised to look into the matter.

Bataclan declined to identify the woman upon her family's request. The woman, who was admitted to the United Christian Hospital on March 30, died on Friday. The woman was married to a Hong Kong man and had three grown children.

The family lived close to the Amoy Gardens apartment complex, where more than 300 residents were sickened by SARS. But neither her husband nor children caught the disease, Bataclan said.

"We're very, very sad about her death," she said. "We were hoping that she would recover. She put up a good fight."

Bataclan said that after the woman's family was advised about what had happened with the first Filipino SARS fatality in Hong Kong, they agreed CY could be cremated too.

The first Filipino killed by SARS in Hong Kong was domestic worker Adela Dalingay who hailed from Abra. Immediately after her death in March, she was cremated because airlines and funeral homes were reluctant to transport the corpse. Her ashes were later sent to the Philippines for burial.

Nine Filipinos have fallen ill with SARS in Hong Kong, but five have already recovered and two remained hospitalized in stable condition, Bataclan said. *AP*

Raid perils gov't-MILF exploratory peace talks

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Pichay, chair of the House committee on national defense. Pichay said the peace talks should be postponed, if not stopped altogether, until the MILF showed "genuine willingness" to talk peace.

In a radio interview, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Sunday's surprise attack would "serve as a hindrance to the resumption of peace talks."

But in a speech at a ceremony in Pampanga, President Macapagal-Arroyo said she had asked government negotiators to demand from MILF leaders "a full renunciation of terrorism" in the talks Kuala Lumpur will host from May 9 to 11.

But while the government remains committed to talk with the MILF, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes yesterday issued a reminder that any peace effort "will not get into the way of the conduct of intensive military operation."

"The people of Siocon had been violated, they've been victimized and justice will be done," Reyes said. "We will not let this crime go unpunished."

Gentlemen's agreement

Jaafar told the INQUIRER the MILF was looking forward to the meeting in Malaysia.

"We are taking the words of the Malaysian defense minister and that of Secretary Norberto Gonzales that it was a gentlemen's agreement," he said. "So off we go to Malaysia regardless of what's happening on the ground."

Gonzales is presidential adviser for special concerns and Malacañang's emissary to the MILF.

"The Siocon incident might be discussed in the resumption of formal peace negotiations," Jaafar said.

Malaysia is brokering the peace talks because it believes it can bring about regional security and stability, Malaysian Defense Minister Najib Razak told The Star of Malaysia.

"We are pursuing the peace process. I think the solution lies in the peace process," Najib said Sunday.

"We are confident that this (peace) is the best way ahead for their country and also for us," he said.

All-out war

In Congress, Pichay urged the government to scrap peace negotiations with the MILF and to launch an "all-out war" against the separatist group.

"The latest attack in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, shows that there are MILF elements who are indeed terrorists. We cannot countenance terrorist attacks that kill civilians and hurt non-military targets because it is our duty to protect our people from terrorism," Pichay said in a statement.

"We already have five interim agreements with the MILF. Why wait for a sixth one if the MILF isn't going to respect it?" he said.

He said the negotiations were useless if the MILF continued its "terror attacks." He said the MILF "track record of involvement in attacks, killing innocent civilians, shows that they are indeed a terrorist organization."

Pichay vented his ire on government negotiators for "seemingly turning a blind eye to the growing list of MILF violations" of the interim agreements.

"The government should not allow itself to be blackmailed into granting concessions to the MILF," Pichay said, adding that the MILF's demand for a return of their camps smacks of blackmail.

Meanwhile, a ranking member of the Moro National Liberation Front, which signed a peace agreement with the government in 1996, said the group was not satisfied with the way the peace accord has been implemented.

The Mindanao Cross, a fortnightly Catholic paper in Cotabato City, quoted Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema as saying: "We are not satisfied with the implementation of the process." The implementing of the Final Peace Agreement is "still a heavy bone of contention."

Sema, also the MNLF secretary general, submitted a situationer report to the eight representatives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference who are assessing the implementation of the seven-year-old accord. He said had it not been for the foreign donor countries, there would be no major economic activities in target areas.

"The government gave too little," he said. *With reports from Carlito Pablo; AFP; Juliet Javellana; and The Star of Malaysia/Asia News Network*

SARS virus can survive outside body for days

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The virus can also survive up to four days in human waste, according to research carried out in laboratories in Hong Kong, Japan and Germany.

"It's the first time we have hard data on the survival of the virus. Before, we were just speculating," Klaus Stohr, WHO's top SARS scientist, told the Washington Post.

"There has been a lot of speculation that the touching of objects could be involved. This shows that transmission by contaminated hands or contaminated objects in the environment can play a role," Stohr added.

Although coughing and sneezing still remain the chief means of spreading the infection, research by government scientists in Hong Kong has found that the virus can stay alive for six hours in adult feces and up to four days in human diarrhea.

The research adds weight to the theory that leaky sewage pipes could have been a source of infection in a particularly nasty outbreak at a Hong Kong apartment complex, where more than 300 people became ill. Researchers now suspect the disease was spread at the Amoy Gardens complex by a SARS-infected man with diarrhea, via a crack in a sewage pipe.

Diarrhea

Stohr said diarrhea provided a more favorable environment for the virus as the stool in that condition was more alkaline. But the stool of newborns, which is more acidic, kills the virus after three hours.

Although only about 10 percent of people stricken with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome get diarrhea, the rate among patients infected in the Amoy Gardens apartment complex was 60 percent.

In various tests by Japanese researchers, genetic material from the virus has been found in the stool and urine of patients.

"The most exciting, or perhaps disturbing, finding is that the virus stays alive in feces for as long as four days at room temperatures. That finding is the most disturbing one because it would suggest that fecal-oral transmission could take place," said Stohr, who was not directly involved in the research but coordinates the work of labs around the world investigating the SARS virus.

It was already clear that the SARS virus could survive winter. The outbreak began in November in China and survived the winter there to spread farther afield in the spring.

Disinfectants

Stohr said the studies "are very important for designing strategies for cleaning and disinfecting."

"The good news from these findings is that the virus can be relatively easily killed with common disinfectants," he said. The Hong Kong scientists found that three common disinfectants—formaldehyde, ethanol and acetone—killed the virus in about five minutes.

Disinfecting toilets in hospitals and homes where people have had contact with SARS would likely solve the problem, Stohr said.

As in cases of flu and colds, doctors say the best defense against SARS for the average person is to wash the hands frequently. *Reports from AP, AFP and Reuters*

Sino villagers riot, beat up gov't officials

From page A1

began protesting last weekend in front of a local government building where suspected SARS patients were being quarantined, said a witness who asked not to be named.

"They shouldn't have hospitalized patients in the government building, which has no medical facilities and professional staff," said the villager, reached by telephone.

The witness said five villagers broke into the building on Sunday night, shattering windows and breaking furniture.

Three officials trying to stop the violence were injured, the witness said.

An officer in the Yuhuan County Public Security Bureau said two people who led the attack would be detained for five to seven days. Five others would be released later, said the policeman, who gave only his surname, Chen.

The witness said villagers continued protesting Monday, when they heard three more people had been quarantined in the building.

Last week, villagers ransacked a school east of Beijing after hearing the building would be used as a SARS ward.

Beijing has sent police to guard 80 reservoirs around the capital in a bid to protect the drinking water supply from SARS contamination, the Beijing Youth Daily reported.

Hong Kong

The number of new cases have been dwindling lately in Hong Kong, and the trend continued Monday when the government reported only eight new cases for a second consecutive day. Three more people died there, raising the territory's toll to 187.

Many Hong Kong patients have been trying to fight SARS with Chinese herbal remedies, and two traditional medicine practitioners from China were discussing treatments with authorities on Monday.

The two were expected to stay in Hong Kong for a few weeks, talking about their experiences treating SARS patients with combinations of Western and Chinese drugs.

Countries around the region have been assessing the severe damage SARS has done to their once-lucrative tourism industries. Australian officials estimated on Monday that the epidemic paired with the war in Iraq would cost its tourism industry US$1.2 billion.

The Australian Tourism Export Council believes the number of tourists visiting Australia in the three months to the end of June will slump by 25 percent compared with last year.

"The joint impact of Iraq and SARS is having a devastating effect on the tourism export industry," said Peter Shelly, the council's managing director.

Doctors from the World Health Organization continued their rare visit to Taiwan, which doesn't have official ties with the UN health agency. During the early stages of the outbreak, China refused to allow WHO to cooperate with the island. China regards the self-ruled island to be part of its territory and opposes Taiwan's attempts to work with UN agencies. *Reports from AP and Reuters*

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration CELEBRATES 21ST ANNIVERSARY

Messages

Office of the President of the Philippines

Malacañan, Palace
Manila
6 May 2003

Greetings to one and all!

Allow me to congratulate the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) on its anniversary, spanning more than two decades of manifestation of deep concern for the welfare and protection of millions of our overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) abroad, their families included.

This day also marks another milestone in the executive department's relationship with OWWA as I, your President, reaffirms my trust and confidence in everyone in this labor agency for leading the government's critical programs and concerns for our OFWs in times of peace and exigencies, notably during the recent Iraq war.

Looking back not so long ago, in a climate of uncertainty and pessimism, our Oplan Kalinga was an outstanding success as the OWWA, alongside with other government agencies and those from the private sector, managed to successfully wage a rear guard action while betraying a stout public face that betrayed a little the anxiety we felt.

Again, congratulations to the OWWA on its 21st anniversary and more power to its workforce.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

Department
of Labor and
Employment

The Department congratulates the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) on its 21st Anniversary and for being among the few government organizations that has been playing an important role in raising awareness and alleviating the problems of the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)

While trying to fill the gap as a social welfare provider alongside with non-governmental organizations and other concerned agencies, the OWWA has also been actively involved, among other things, in policy analysis, coalition and capacity building for other networks in developing services for the OFWs. Very valuable contributions, indeed, apart from being effective advocates of Filipino migrant concerns.

Again, congratulations on your anniversary. Kudos to all OWWA officials and employees and more power!

Mabuhay!

PATRICIA STO. TOMAS
DOLE Secretary

Overseas
Workers
Welfare
Administration

A very warm and sincere congratulations to the entire family of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), in the event of the Agency's 21st Anniversary.

Kudos to the unsung heroes of the agency, the simple rank-and-file employees, whose dedication and commitment to serve the public has been tried and tested even during the most difficult times. Their concern for the welfare of the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) has been extended to the migrant workers' families. A sincere and down-to-earth public service which is very much "OWWA-like" - unselfish, focused, heartwarming.

It is in the same breath that we extend our appreciation to the partners of the Agency, both in the public and private sectors, which undeniably became the 'intangible wings' and 'invisible force' especially when the times get rough. These sectors have continuously placed their faith and confidence in the ability and capability of the OWWA to serve the interest of the OFW populace.

Surely, this year's theme: 'OWWA at OFWs: Ugnayang Pinatatag ng Panahon, Magkabalikat sa lahat ng Panahon' aptly fits the long lasting partnership forged between the two entities. After all, the real heroes in today's momentous celebration, are the OFWs and their beloved ones, who relentlessly give honor and prestige to the Filipino race's enormous workforce.

Again, a jubilant Happy Founding Day and God bless OWWA!

VIRGILIO R. ANGELO
OWWA Administrator

21st century service on OWWA's 21st year

Overseas
Workers
Welfare
Administration

WITH the continued and great demand for OFWs, OWWA makes sure that it is beside every Filipino migrant worker, giving them essential support and assistance, so that they can bring to fore their dreams of living a stable and worry-free life with their family when they choose to retire. Now on its 21st anniversary, OWWA continues its commitment in being a pro-active government agency that cares and is sensitive to the needs of the overseas Filipino workers.

OWWA: then and beyond

In 1974, after the government launched the overseas employment program, a need came for implementing an agency that will advocate the welfare and preserve the well-being of Filipino overseas workers, so as to curb the social and welfare problems faced by the workers.

In response to this need, the then Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB) resolved on October 18, 1976 to install a fund which was sourced from monetary contributions of employers hiring Filipinos through OEDB for overseas work. What then ensued was a series of presidential issuances which form the legal basis of the Welfare Fund for overseas workers.

In 1982 when the agency became fully operational, it implemented three major programs in its first year of existence such as: burial gratuity, repatriation assistance and public assistance.

The years that followed saw more programs from OWWA that would prove to be of great benefit to OFWs. Since its inception, the agency has provided many programs and services which are designed for the OFWs welfare.

Assistance programs

To encourage OFWs to engage in productive ventures when they stop working abroad, the Self Employment Entrepreneurship Development Program (Seed) was introduced.

Designed to hone the entrepreneurial skills of OFWs and give them more and better options when they seek means of income in the future, the Kabuhayan 2000 was introduced. Programs and services were also decentralized to ensure prompt delivery.

OWWA has also sharpened their legal assistance and improved on their medical benefit packages both for the members and their families. Even their membership identification system has been updated with the e-card system to ensure that it is tamper-proof.

The OWWA Repatriation / Airport Assistance Team manifests quality services with a heart, which provided assistance in the release of human remains, medical assistance to physically and / or mentally ill workers, escort services, ticketing assistance and provision of temporary shelter among others.

FROM left: Admin. Virgilio R. Angelo, Sec. Patricia Sto. Tomas, and Special Envoy Roy Cimatu, on their way to a conference on evacuation and repatriation plans for OFWs, shortly before the Iraq conflict escalated.

21st century service

In 2003, when the world was slapped with the shocking headline of a pending Iraq-US war, OWWA confirmed its pro-active aspect, with projects such as the OWWA Task Force Kalinga 2003 initially designed to make Contingency Plans for OFWs due the then pending war between Iraq and the United States and also served as the agency's vehicle in monitoring the conditions of 1.4 million OFWs and their dependents located in several countries in the Middle East; and the OWWA-PNB Tele-Ugnayan, which was a successful project of the agency with the Philippine National Bank (PNB), in response to the urgency of the OFWs and their families to communicate during the Middle East crisis. Both projects were visited by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and was very much pleased with these initiatives by OWWA.

PRESIDENT Arroyo takes time out to talk to OFWs and Philippine embassy officials in Kuwait in a surprise visit to OWWA.

Still in its pro-active stance, in its 21st anniversary, OWWA conducted a medical mission, distributing free vitamin C tablets to OFWs and their families nationwide as preventive measure against the spread of the dreaded Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus.

Not to be left behind in the technologies of the 21st century, OWWA joined the information superhighway by launching its own website at www.owwa.gov.ph, where OWWA services, information, accomplishments, and other concerns can be furnished with just a click of the mouse. OWWA can also immediately tie-up with telecommunication companies in case another emergency which concerns OFWs happen. And because texting is a hype in the country, Filipinos can now text their inquiries and other concerns to OWWA's number at 0917-8986992.

OWWA gears up

Through many trials and tribulations, defining moments and opportunities, all these years, OWWA has accomplished so much, but the agency is not contented to sit on its laurels, especially now with the latest innovations in technology and communications, OWWA makes sure that it delivers 21st century service. A better life for their family, a bright future for their children, these are just some of the dreams that entice Filipinos to work abroad, and as they reach these dreams, they can be assured that OWWA will be there for them. An agency that cares and is receptive to the OFWs' welfare and needs; an institution that wants nothing more than for an OFW to reach success - that is OWWA .

OWWA and the OFW: A lasting partnership

ONE OF the many beneficial thrusts of OWWA is to encourage OFWs to engage in productive endeavors after their stints abroad. Here is just one in a myriad of success stories on how OFWs and their families benefited from OWWA:

The Gatil-Owen success story

Mang Sotero was a welder earning a meager P200 to 250 a day during the times that he had work. There was no permanent work for him. Life was hard for them. So in 1982, Mang Sotero decided to find work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He left with a clear goal and that was to sustain the needs of his family. Aling Mary, meanwhile, saved every possible peso out of the money that Mang Sotero sent. She decided to augment the income of Mang Sotero by working as a weaver at Narda's, one of Baguio's popular weaving company. In 1986, Mang Sotero's employer reduced his salary by 20 percent, which made him decide to stay with his family for good.

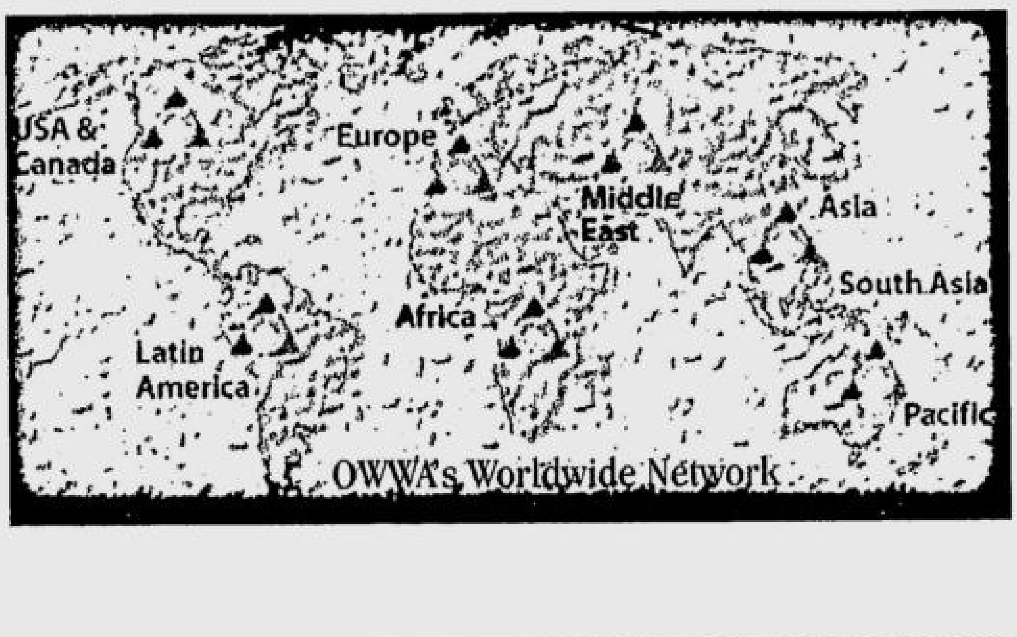
When Mang Sotero decided to stay, he knew that they had to do something to extend the life of the savings they made. Using the knowledge and experience of Aling Mary, they both set up a loom and weaving business using their savings of 15,000. As business grew, they realized that they needed to expand their production to accommodate the growing demands. Mang Sotero being a bonafide member of OWWA decided to inquire on possible funding assistance. This marked their fruitful relationship with the OWWA-CAR.

On October 11, 1991, the couple's project application was finally approved in the amount of P10,000 under the Micro-Enterprise Lending Window of the Expanded Livelihood Development Program (ELDP). The ELDP was one of two component programs of the Integrated Return Program for OFWs, the Social Reintegration Component being the other.

The demand for their products continued to grow and so they had to apply for a re-loan from OWWA. The project moved on to better financial footing and indeed it provided Mang Sotero and Aling Mary's family their basic needs and more. Sales ranged from P20,000 to P50,000 monthly and continued to grow.

That was not all there was to the relationship between the Gatil-Owens and OWWA. They were participants to OWWA's free Enterprise Development Training (a course given to aspiring entrepreneurs) and to a Project Development and Management Course which guides them to the accomplishment of their project feasibility report and the general how to's of project management. Courses on Basic Book keeping and other specific courses were also availed by the couple.

Eventually, the couple responded to OWWA's invitations to attend OFW and other Livelihood Fairs. These are the mechanisms maximized to introduce their products to interested buyers and customers. Aling Mary, consequently became an active member of the Cordillera Overseas Returnees and Dependents Women's Association (Cordewa), an organization initiated and assisted by the OWWA-CAR under the Social Reintegration of the IRPO. Mang Sotero became an active leader and he was one of those who initiated the organization of an association at Quirino Hill.



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Supreme Court voids Naia 3 contract

From page A1

developer had breached several key terms.

Her decision came after allegations of corruption and soaring costs swelled to $657 million the project's original price tag of $350 million.

The contract was signed under the Estrada administration.

Ten justices voted to nullify the contracts, while three dissented. Associate Justice Antonio Carpio abstained from the voting and deliberations on the issue. He did not reveal his reasons.

The decision was written by Associate Justice Reynato Puno and concurred in by Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and Associate Justices Josue Bellosillo, Consuelo Ynarez-Santiago, Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez, Renato Corona, Conchita Carpio-Morales, Antonio Panganiban and Romeo Callejo.

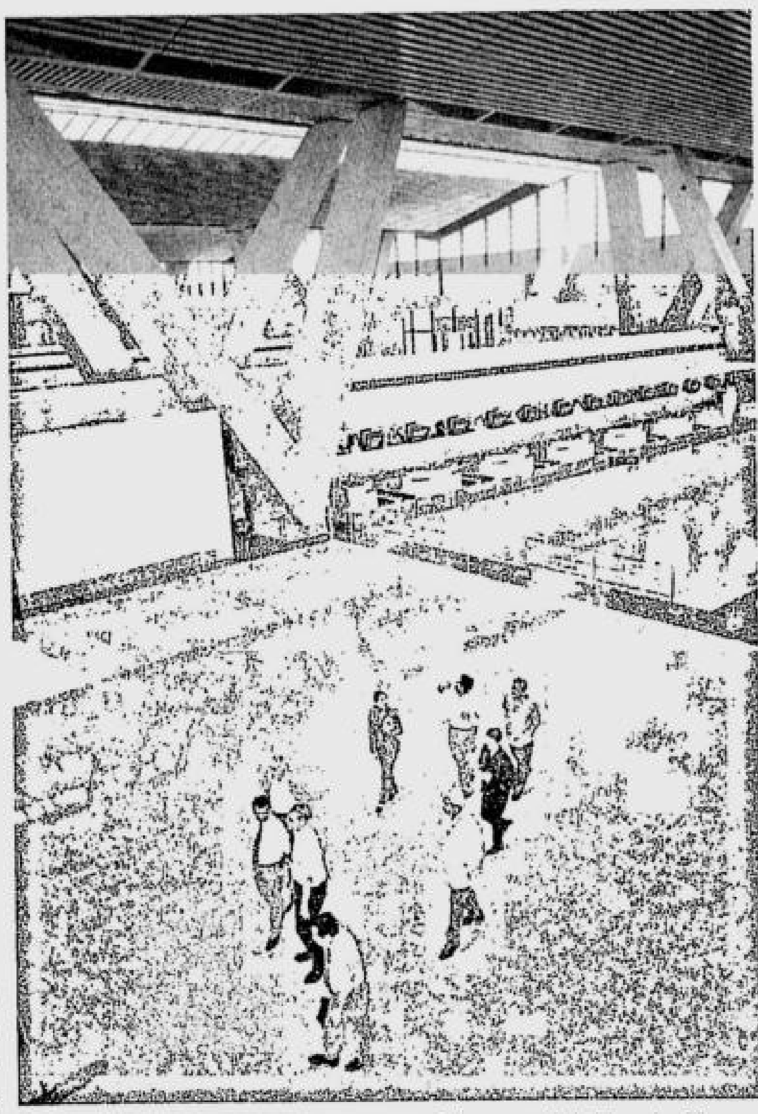
Those who dissented were Associate Justices Jose Vitug, Leonardo Quisumbing and Adolfo Azcuna. Only 14 justices voted because Associate Justice Vicente Mendoza retired on April 5.

"In sum, this court rules that in view of the absence of the requisite financial capacity of the Paircargo consortium, predecessor of respondent Piatco, the award by the Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee of the contract for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Naia III is null and void," the high tribunal said.

The high court also declared null and void the 1997 Concession Agreement (CA) because it contained "material and substantial amendments, which amendments had the effect of converting the 1997 CA into an entirely different agreement from contract bid upon."

The amendments, it said, was contrary to public policy.

Also voided were the CA provisions in relation to the provision of the Amended and Restated Concession Agreement (Arca)—which constitute direct government guarantee expressly prohibited by, among others, the BOT law and its implementing rules and regulations—and the three Supplements "being accessory contracts to the Arca."



ROGER MARGALLO

FOREIGN inspectors are given a tour of the new Naia Terminal 3 during a simulated passenger departure test in October 2002.

JESS YUSON

CHENG YONG, Piatco president.

JEFFREY CHENG, treasurer and son of Piatco president.

Four petitions

The Supreme Court decision stemmed from four petitions for prohibition seeking to invalidate the Piatco contracts.

The petitions sought to prohibit the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) and the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) from implementing the Piatco agreements.

Last December, the full court refused to rule on the matter, and instead ordered the parties to consider arbitration.

However, the government did not take any step for a possible renegotiation, prompting Piatco to run to the International Court Chamber of Commerce-International Court of Arbitration.

In taking jurisdiction of the issues involved, the Supreme Court declared it had jurisdiction over them, and the petitioners had legal standing to file the pleadings before the tribunal.

On the ongoing arbitration, it said: "Again, we hold that the arbitration step taken by Piatco will not oust this court of its jurisdiction over the cases at bar."

The high court admitted that the issues were complicated, but further "made difficult by their intersecting legal and economic implications."

"The court is aware of the far-reaching fall out effects of the ruling which it makes today. For more than a century, and whenever the exigencies of the time demands it, this court has never shirked from its solemn duty to dispense justice resolve 'actual controversies,'" it said.

In resolving the petitions, the Supreme Court discussed both the procedural and the merits of the legal issues involved.

Not a qualified bidder

To start with, Paircargo Consortium—predecessor of Piatco—was not a qualified bidder.

The high court noted that the consortium's total net worth was P558 million, or only 6.08 percent of the project cost (Naia IPT 3).

This was "an amount substantially less than the prescribed minimum equity investment required for the project in the amount of P2,755,095,000," said the Supreme Court said.

The PBAC had prescribed a 30-percent equity in accordance with the 70-30 debt-to-equity ratio.

As to the validity of the CA, the Supreme Court conceded that a winning bidder was not precluded from modifying or amending certain provisions of the contract bid upon.

"However, such changes must not alter the basic parameters of the contract and would constitute a denial to the other bidders of the opportunity to bid on the same terms," it said.

A close comparison of the draft CA attached to the bid documents and the 1997 CA revealed that the document differed in many aspects, according to the high court.

The Supreme Court pointed out that the fees that might be imposed and collected by Piatco under the draft CA and the 1997 CA were different.

For example, the 1997 CA reduced the number of fees that should be subject to approval by the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA).

"Under the 1997 CA, fees which Piatco may adjust whenever it deems necessary without need for consent of DOTC/MIAA are 'non-public utility revenues' and is defined as 'all other income not classified as public utility revenues derived from operations of the terminal and the terminal complex.'"

"Thus, under the 1997 CA, groundhandling fees, rentals from airline offices and porterage fees are no longer subject to MIAA regulation," the court said.

The Supreme Court said that when taken as a whole, the "changes under the 1997 CA with respect to reduction in the types of fees that are subject to MIAA regulation and the relaxation of such regulation with respect to other fees are significant amendments that substantially distinguish the draft CA from the 1997 CA."

Thus, the court said, it was not "very difficult to see" that the changes in the 1997 CA translated to "direct and concrete financial advantages for Piatco which were not available at the time the contract was offered for bidding."

Government guarantee

The Supreme Court also discovered that the draft CA did not give direct government guarantee to the liabilities of Piatco in the event of the latter's default.

However, the 1997 CA provided that default by Piatco of its loans used to finance the project "triggers the occurrence of certain events that leads to the assumption by the government of the liability for the loans."

Even if the government chooses not to takeover the operations of Terminal 3 and allow Piatco's unpaid creditors to operate it, the government is still at risk of assuming Piatco's obligations "should the latter be unable to designate a qualified operator within the prescribed period," the Supreme Court said.

The high tribunal said that this financial advantage was a significant modification that translated into better terms and conditions for Piatco.

"Any government action which permits any substantial variance between the conditions under which the bids are invited and the contract executed after the award thereof is a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction which warrants proper judicial action," it said.

"In view of the above discussion, the fact that the foregoing substantial amendments were made on the 1997 CA renders the same null and void for being contrary to public policy," the Supreme Court said.

It reminded Piatco that the BOT law allowed the private sector to finance infrastructure projects, provided that direct guarantee, subsidy and equity by the government were "strictly prohibited."

To declare the Piatco contracts valid despite the clear statutory prohibition against a direct government guarantee "would only make a mockery of what the BOT law seeks to prevent—which is to expose the government to the risk of incurring a monetary obligation."

The Supreme Court said existing contracts awarded to service providers currently operating at Naia 1 should be "respected."

"It is MIAA's responsibility to ensure that whoever by contract is given the right to operate Naia IPT 3 will do so within the bounds of law and with due regard to the rights of third parties and above all, the interest of the public," the high court said.

Ruling 'fatally flawed'

From page A1

predecessor, did not have the financial capacity to build the Naia Terminal 3.

"What better way to dispute that conclusion than by the mere fact that a multi-million-peso structure now stands at the project site," he said.

"We don't want our country to be the laughing stock of the international business as well as legal community," he added.

Naia 3 general manager Guillermo Cunanan said that most of the points raised against Piatco were given straight enough answers by the consortium, so it was quite "unbelievable" that the high tribunal had decided against it.

Some of the arguments presented by the plaintiffs included the presence of a government guarantee on the contract and its supplements, the change in specifications of the terminal and the financial incapability of the consortium.

Cunanan said there was no government guarantee on the project at all. The only provision even remotely resembling a guarantee in the contract and its supplements was the payment for assets that would be turned over to the government.

This amount would be based on the value of the consortium's loans or the appraised value of the asset, whichever is higher, he said.

The new terminal is valued at around $350 million, at least, according to Piatco's German principal, Fraport AG,

As for the consortium's financial capability, Cunanan said this had already been proven by the fact that the new terminal was currently standing and ready for operation.

Justice Undersecretary Manuel A.J. Teehankee said the Macapagal administration believed that the decision "vindicates the government stand that the contracts were indeed onerous and not in accordance with the original bid documents, which had assured limited cost of the terminal construction, but in the end, resulted in greater liabilities and costs to the government."

"The government, through the Office of the Solicitor General and the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel, has been sustained in its position that the 1997 agreements with Piatco are null and void," said Teehankee, who serves as acting OGCC chief in a concurrent capacity.

But he clarified that the government would not abandon its legal obligations to Piatco. He said that under international law and the country's laws, the government was mandated to reimburse Piatco all its expenses in constructing the near-completed airport terminal.

"The builder in good faith—Piatco—is entitled to (recover) all its expenses related to the (terminal construction)," he said.

Cunanan said the court decision would hurt the country's chances of attracting investors as it would set a precedent for all future government projects.

But Supreme Court spokesperson Ismael G. Khan Jr. said the tribunal's unprecedented ruling was not really bad for the country's investment climate.

"In fact, foreign investors would appreciate the decision of the Supreme Court in the Piatco case as it upholds the law and public policy. If you will carefully read the court's decision, it actually promotes predictability in commercial transactions and a level playing field among investors." *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

Lopez firm ordered to pay gov't $150M

From page A1

The order was issued to another Lopez-run utility, the Maynilad Water Co.

The order was recently issued by the panel created by the Paris-based International Court of Arbitration to resolve the dispute between Maynilad and the state-owned Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), Justice Undersecretary Manuel A.J. Teehankee said yesterday. Teehankee is the acting head of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel.

The arbitration panel, headed by Judge Allan Philip, a Dane, included retired Supreme Court Justice Bernardo Pardo, who represented MWSS, and lawyer Antonio Picazo, who represented Maynilad.

The panel gave Maynilad until June 15 to comply with the order. Maynilad is 59-percent owned by Benpres Holdings Corp., the flagship of the Lopez family, and 40-percent owned by Ondeo, a French multinational affiliated with Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux.

The dispute began when Maynilad returned its 25-year water concession for about half of Metro Manila to the MWSS in December, citing "compelling financial, regulatory and natural causes in the last five years."

Adjustment of rates

Maynilad blamed the El Niño weather phenomenon, the effects of the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the delay in the completion of a river basin project for its problems. It also blamed MWSS' failure to implement an adjustment of rates for its financial woes, which prompted the company to stop paying the concession fees, or payments for the MWSS debts it assumed after winning the west zone concession for Metro Manila in 1997.

Maynilad's non-payment of the fees forced the government, through the MWSS, to advance payments of more than P4.5 billion.

By returning the concession, Maynilad expected to get back the P17 billion it had invested in water distribution since 1997.

Maynilad and the MWSS then brought the dispute to the International Court of Arbitration.

"The appeals panel has come out with an interim award requiring Maynilad to renew its current $120-million bond to act as security for the MWSS," Teehankee said.

The $120 million should be renewed because it will expire by July this year, he said. But Teehankee said an additional $30-million bond should be posted by the water firm.

He said the payment of the bond should be made "pending the appeal and hearing" of the dispute over the validity of terminating the concession agreement.

The $150-million performance bond is necessary to ensure that Maynilad "fully secures all obligations it has to the government and to the MWSS," the justice undersecretary said.

The performance bond serves as security, which can be used by the MWSS to service foreign loans.

Under the concession agreement awarded to Maynilad, the performance bond "is the security which ensures due payment to MWSS of all essential (financial) obligations that are not paid or that are overdue," Teehankee said.

"While requiring that the drawing on the performance bond be suspended at this moment until the opportunity to renew the bond for Maynilad is given, the appeals panel also ordered that all obligations under the concession be performed," Teehankee said.

"The MWSS takes this to mean that all payments due MWSS should be properly fulfilled," he said.

Concession fees

The order to renew the bond was necessary "in light of the current outstanding obligations in concession fees which are approaching P5 billion, or $90 million."

Currently, the MWSS is tasked with settling all foreign loans incurred prior to the privatization of water services in Metro Manila.

However, Maynilad can directly settle all its foreign borrowings made after it secured the concession to service the west zone.

As the government's regulatory body, the MWSS intended to withdraw from the bond after Maynilad failed to pay P5 billion in concession fees. But Maynilad opposed this, and secured a restraining order from the panel.

"But the appeals panel order had in fact balanced both sides," Teehankee said.

He said that while Maynilad was granted protection from the MWSS decision to deduct its deficiencies from the bond, the MWSS was allowed to collect a total of $150 million.

Reached for comment, Maynilad spokesperson and vice president Jesus Matubis declined to issue a statement, saying it was a matter that should be addressed by the company's legal department.

Matubis referred the INQUIRER to lawyer Tanya Llamas, but the latter also declined to comment. She said the lawyer in the firm handling Maynilad was out of the office and in a meeting with Maynilad officials. *With a report from Gerald Lacuarta*

Jinggoy seeks court okay for trip to US

From page A1

to the United States?

Two months after being granted bail, former San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan to let him go on a month-long vacation more than 7,000 miles across the Pacific with his family.

And, uh, could they please leave in the next three weeks?

State prosecutors, who have yet to snap their jaws shut at press time, are determined to be spoilsports.

"We will definitely oppose (the appeal)," Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said in an interview. "He didn't give a compelling reason to make the trip."

Not even "for the children's educational enrichment and enlightenment?"

The kids should probably go then. But dad Jinggoy is still on trial for plunder along with his father, deposed President Joseph Estrada, and the prosecution has asked the anti-graft court to cancel his P500,000 bail.

The March 6 court ruling that gave Jinggoy provisional liberty indicated that the ex-mayor was "no flight risk," owing to his good behavior while in detention for almost two years with his father. Chances that he would escape were "remote, if not nil," the court said.

Earlier, the Sandigan special division hearing the plunder cases had declared as "speculative" the charge that Jinggoy had conspired with his father to collect monthly payola from big-time "jueteng" operators. However, the court did say that he might have collected jueteng money just the same without the ex-President's knowledge.

In his motion to travel yesterday, Jinggoy reiterated that the court had "no reason to be apprehensive" that he would flee, "considering (his) status in society."

Villa-Ignacio countered that, in the first place, the younger Estrada had "no reason to go to the US—no medical problems, and no urgent matters to attend to."

The motion prepared by Estrada defense lawyer Noel Malaya also said Jinggoy's family intended to be back in a month "or even less," in time for the resumption of the children's classes.

Villa-Ignacio retorted: "If our motion for reconsideration (of the bail) is granted while he is abroad, do you really think he will still come back?"

To the rigors of daily life in confinement?

JOAN BONDOC

FACEOFF
Just in case you're wondering, the boy and girl from Krus na Ligas, Quezon City are trying to move the peso coins from their foreheads to their chins by using the muscles on their face without letting the coins fall to the ground. Expect more such games to come your way this May, when fiestas are celebrated throughout the country.

German claims Customs man wanted P1.4M

But arrested suspect accuses complainant of plotting to blackmail him

By Christian Esguerra and Philip Tubeza

THE CUSTOMS collector who was arrested last week for alleged extortion had demanded P1.4 million to facilitate the release of six BMW sedans, according to the German complainant Reimer Werner.

But Emelito Villaruz, of the Bureau of Customs office in Olongapo City, yesterday denied Werner's claim and accused the German of trying to get the sedans into the country without an import permit.

Villaruz also accused Werner of trying to blackmail him.

The German told the police that Villaruz had initially demanded P100,000 for the release of each of the cars, which Werner had imported from Germany through Subic last March. He claimed Villaruz had jacked up the price to P150,000, then to P237,000.

He said he was willing to pay P100,000 for each car "to get things over with, but the last price was just too much."

He said he eventually managed to bring the cars to Manila by paying P150,000 to Global International Philippines Corp.

He said that on April 2, the cars were registered at the Land Transportation Office in Quezon City after he paid an average of P50,000 in duties and taxes for each BMW.

But while he was at the LTO, Werner said he received a text message from Villaruz.

"Somebody saw you driving the car," the message allegedly ran. "Please return them to Subic ASAP. You are making things worst (sic)."

Werner then brought four of the cars back to Subic and arranged an entrapment operation with the National Bureau of Investigation, Werner said.

At 9:30 a.m. on April 30, NBI men arrested Villaruz as he was accepting P29,000 in marked money. The cash was part of the P948,000 Villaruz supposedly asked in exchange for the cars.

WERNER

But Villaruz said he could not have demanded the money from Werner since his office did not deal with the German directly. He said the cars' papers showed that they were with the Global International Philippines Corp., which is within the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. He also said it should have been GIPC officers who should have approached his office to settle the duties for the cars.

Villaruz claimed that Werner had insisted on paying directly to him under the government's amnesty plan for tax cheats. He said he did not want to deal with him because the cars' shipment papers showed that the vehicles were intended for another country.

He said the German had paid P50,000 for each of the used cars at a one-stop tax center but he still did not have an "import permit" from the SBMA.

He insisted that there were eight other people in the office at the time he supposedly asked Werner for money. He added that he had four witnesses who would attest to this.

Villaruz added that he did not know how the traces of ultraviolet powder from the marked money were found on his palm.

"I did not touch the money, but I was handcuffed after I was arrested," said Villaruz. "No other part of my body has traces of the powder."

Rep. Abraham Mitra: Greatness in humility

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

GOVERNOR Joel T. Reyes of Palawan, a rabid supporter of the President, might be courting her disfavor because of what he's about to do.

Reyes is set to file a case that he hopes will legally settle the issue of Palawan's shares from the revenues of the Camago-Malampaya Natural Gas Project.

Reyes said he had no recourse but to file a civil case against the national government because negotiations for the province's share in the revenues have reached a stalemate.

The respondents in the civil case are top government officials headed by the President herself.

* * *

The governor says that under the Constitution and a provision in the Local Government Code which states the "host province has an equal share to the earnings derived from the extraction of hydrocarbon deposits found thereat."

The Malampaya project is expected to make Palawan the richest province in the country as revenues are estimated to reach $2.1 billion over a 20-year period.

But the national government says Palawan cannot have a share of the revenues of the Malampaya project since it is allegedly "off Palawan."

Palawan's Reyes insists that the Malampaya project is within the province.

"Mon, I want the President to know that I support her 100 percent. But I have to fight for my constituents. I have nothing personal against the President," Reyes said.

* * *

Before yesterday, I thought Rep. Abraham Mitra of Palawan's second district was a typical congressman: arrogant and haughty.

But now I look at him as a midget would look at a man who stands 10 feet tall. Suddenly, this congressman who stands at 5'7" is a giant in my eyes.

The congressman and I were on the same Philippine Airlines flight from Puerto Princesa City yesterday morning.

* * *

As I got inside the PAL plane, I saw Mitra, one of the sons of the late Speaker Ramon Mitra, standing in one corner of the aircraft. I could sense something was wrong. He looked like a "*basang sisiw*" or a guy who had just received a dressing down from his boss. So, I approached him.

After the usual greetings, I asked him why he hadn't taken his seat at the economy section, which he always takes in going to and from Puerto Princesa.

He said that the pilot had him stand at the corner while his identity was being checked. He was mistaken for a terrorist! I nearly burst out laughing.

* * *

From what I gathered, Mitra was at the airport VIP lounge when the call to board the aircraft came.

Like other government officials who get the "courtesies of the house" at the Puerto Princesa airport, the young congressman didn't join the other passengers boarding the plane.

But nobody from the police airport security escorted him aboard the plane, raising suspicion from the pilot that he was a terrorist.

* * *

So, when he got aboard the aircraft, Mitra was accosted by the pilot. In front of the other passengers, he was berated and told to stand in a corner while the pilot radioed the ground to send policemen on board.

It was at this juncture that I came along.

I volunteered to tell the pilot that he was mistaken about Mitra. That he is a congressman.

"*Huwag na, Mon, tama lang naman na sitahin ako dahil wala akong* security *pag-akyat ko sa eroplano* (It's just right that I was accosted because I was not escorted when I climbed up the plane). The pilot is only protecting the safety of the other passengers," the young congressman from Palawan said.

Mitra was allowed to go to his seat only after a policeman, looking worried, climbed up the plane and went straight to the pilot's cabin.

I asked Mitra why he didn't introduce himself to the pilot when the latter accosted him. He said he didn't want to sound "*mayabang*" (haughty).

Congressman Mitra, you're really your father's son!

* * *

Former Immigration Commissioner Rufus Rodriguez, spokesperson of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, wrote to correct some details in an article I wrote in the April 24 issue.

1."It was a PC Lt.Col. Panfilo Lacson, not a 'lst Lt. Lacson,' then chief of the Police Intelligence Group of the Metrocom Intelligence and Security Group and team leader assigned to kidnap-for-ransom cases, who rescued Mrs. Gokongwei-Pe."

2. Lt. Col. Lacson was the deputy of the late Col. Rolando Abadilla, not of a 'Captain Reynaldo Berroya.' Mr. Berroya was then the chief of Metrocom's Reaction Strike Force, not the Metrocom Security and Investigation Group," whose mission was to deal with illegal gambling, smuggling and illegal drug syndicates. He had nothing to do whatsoever with kidnap-for-ransom cases."

You're right, Rufus. At that time Lacson was already a lieutenant colonel and I was already with the Bulletin Today (now the Manila Bulletin) and not with the Times Journal as I said in that column.

Also, Berroya was already a colonel and no longer with the MISG. He was already the commander of the Metrocom Reaction Strike Force.

But Lacson was still under Col. Rolando Abadilla, who was chief of both the MISG and M-2 (Metrocom intelligence).

So, Lacson cannot claim sole credit for Robina's rescue as it was a team effort.

METROBRIEFS

Free insurance in Parañaque

MORE than 6,000 tricycle drivers in Parañaque City have been granted free accident insurance. Members of at least 35 tricycle drivers and operators organizations received insurance certificates from Fortune Life Inc. on May 1. Each recipient will receive P10,000 in annual accident insurance—a project of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and the Parañaque city government. *Christian Esguerra*

Stabbing frenzy in Makati

ERNESTO Vergara appeared to have enjoyed himself when he stabbed and wounded Michael Asigurado on Pasong Tamo Street in Makati City Sunday night. Witnesses told police that Vergara, 24, even raised his arms, laughed and jumped after he stabbed Asigurado three times. Vergara is now behind bars where he is not laughing any more, police said.

Jamie Alarcon

Hostage in Commonwealth

CHRISTEO Ronquillo, said to be suffering from epilepsy, took his nephew hostage after no one showed up for his birthday in Quezon City on Sunday night. Police said Ronquillo, 23, also became upset when he did not get a ball on his birthday. In his depression, Ronquillo poked a knife at his nephew inside their residence in Barangay Commonwealth at around 10 p.m. Responding lawmen shot the suspect in the leg and rescued the boy unharmed. *Anne Luisa Villarico*

Drowning in QC pool

MELORIS Claros, 7, on Sunday drowned in the swimming pool of a hotel on Mother Ignacia Street in Quezon City. Police said members of Claros' family left the boy alone in the pool of the Danarra Hotel. When they came back, they saw Claros floating in the water. Claros, of Caloocan City, was taken to the Capitol Medical Center where he was declared dead on arrival, police said. *Anne Luisa Villarico*

Death leap on Edsa

AN UNIDENTIFIED man jumped off the Evangelista-Edsa flyover at around noon on Sunday. The man, who was said to be mentally disturbed, landed on a passing L-300 van, startling its occupants. The passengers took the man to the Ospital ng Maynila, where he was declared dead. Witnesses told police that they saw the man mumbling to himself before jumping off. Police said the man was about 33 years old, fair-skinned, and of medium height. Tattooed on each of the fingers on his left hand are letters spelling out the name "Ruben." The man's body was taken to the Veronica funeral parlor. *Maria Khristina Villanueva*

MECENAS

Baby Hans has heart problem

AT FIRST glance, 2-month-old Hans Stewart Mecenas is the picture of health. The second son of Stella Mecenas, Hans seems like any other baby his age—save for the color of his face and lips.

The color of Hans' face is a manifestation of his congenital heart disease. Dr. Wilberto Lopez, head of the Pediatric Cardiology department of the Philippine Heart Center, said that Hans has a rapidly closing patent ductus arteriosis (PDA), which affects the supply of oxygen to his brain. Mecenas said that unless an artificial valve is implanted in Hans' heart, the baby's brain would be damaged. Doctors say the surgery will cost Mecenas P200,000.

Those who wish to help Hans may contact his mother at (0917) 839-0056. They may also reach her through Vivian Sulam at 743-6511. *Jamie Alarcon, Khristina Villanueva*

Manila lays claim to Pasig River isle

By Jerome Aning

THE MANILA City Council has formally laid claim to an isle, which is actually a sandbar, popularly known as Isla Laki or Aplaya, located at the mouth of the Pasig River.

During a session last week, the councilors approved on first reading an ordinance establishing the city government's jurisdiction over the area, and converting the isle into a commericial-tourism area.

A great portion of the isle—mostly made up of sand, silt and rock—is underwater at high tide.

The proposal, authored by Councilor Cita Astals, has been referred to the Council's committees on tourism and laws.

Astals said there is a need to protect, preserve and enhance Isla Laki's ecology.

The isle, located in the southern portion of the mouth of the Pasig River and west of the South Harbor's seawall, was once part of the river's old delta.

The place is currently populated by about 1,000 squatter residents, many of whom earn a living by fishing or working in the harbor.

The squatter shanties are erected on stilts. Most residents move out when the rainy season sets in.

Astals said the isle has a potential as a tourism spot, which would be the best way to preserve the ecology of the place, a popular feeding area for fish and birds in Manila Bay.

The councilor wants the isle renamed "Aplaya de Manila."

Once passed, the measure would prohibit quarrying, the construction of structures, lighting of bonfires, parking of boats, commercial fishing, digging of wells or laying of pipes on the isle.

SJS seeks to ban drug tests on students, professionals

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SOCIAL Justice Society (SJS) yesterday asked the high tribunal to stop the government from conducting drug tests on students, professionals and even applicants for government positions.

In a petition for prohibition, the SJS has asked the Supreme Court to declare as unconstitutional and "of no force and effect" the mandatory drug testing as required by Section 36 of Republic Act 9165, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

The 10-page petition named the Dangerous Drugs Board and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency as respondents, SJS counsel Samson Alcantara said.

The RA 9165 provision in question empowers the government, through the health department and its accredited drug testing laboratories, to conduct random drug testing on high school and college students, and officers and employees of public and private offices.

The law also requires mandatory drug testing on persons charged before the prosecutors office, with offenses carrying more than six years, and candidates for public office—whether appointed or elected.

Alcantara claimed that enforcing the provision would violate the people's constitutional rights, as enshrined in Section 2 of the Bill of Rights. Alcantara likened it to unreasonable search and seizures.

"One of the means employed to attain such purpose ... without probable cause, is unreasonable ... an unwarranted invasion of the individual's right to privacy," Alcantara said.

He also claimed that the provision violates the equal protection clause of the Constitution.

He said that the tests could be used to harass student leaders or union officials, "whom the school or employer considers undesirable."

According to Alcantara, Congress had unduly delegated to schools and employers the "unbridled authority to determine how often, under what conditions, and where drugs test may be made."

Hong Kong reports 12 more SARS deaths
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2 Abu hostages escape
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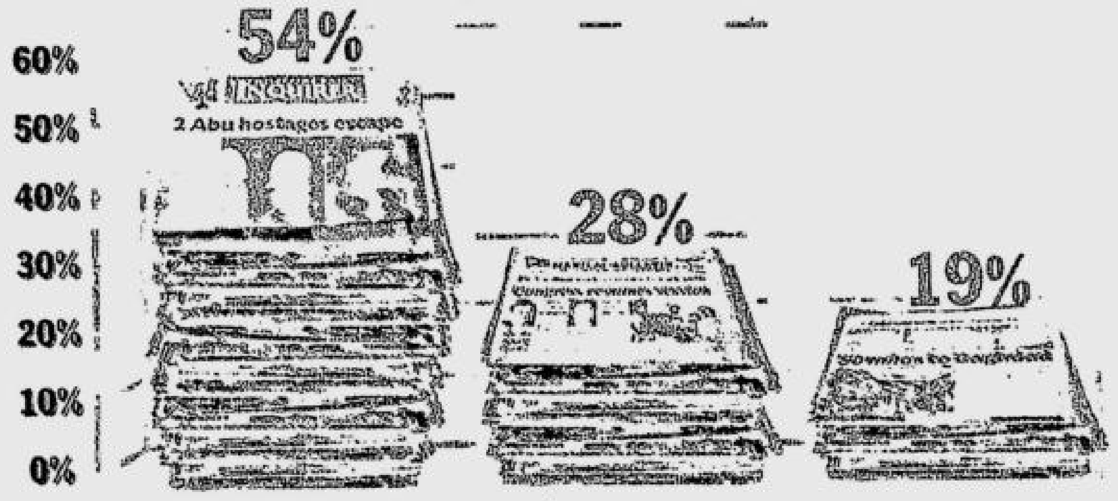

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Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

BEATING THE VIRUS
Caloocan City Mayor Rey Malonzo (center) leads a mass exercise for city officials and employees as part of a Metro-wide campaign against SARS. Other local government units have been distributing free vitamins and medicines among their residents. ERIK ARAZAS

Malabon showdown a no-show

By Tina Santos

VICENCIO

MALABON Mayor Amado Vicencio and acting mayor Mark Alan Jay Yambao yesterday did not show up at the flag ceremony in City Hall even as both city officials on Sunday vowed that they would assume the post of city mayor.

Instead, city administrator Samilo Borlongay appealed to higher authorities to settle the issue so that everything would go back to normal in the city.

He also urged all city hall employees, particularly the department heads, to continue with the delivery of basic services to the people and minimize the prejudice in public service.

"I hope the higher authorities can do something about our current problem," Borlongay said. "But regardless of who the mayor is, I urge all employees to continue with their work to lessen our problem."

Department of Interior and Local Government Secretary Joey Lina said in a phone interview yesterday that they are still studying the issue but vowed that they would act on it accordingly.

But DILG legal services director Jose Emeterio Moreno Jr. said there is a possibility that they would recommend to Malacañang the lifting of Vicencio's suspension because of the Temporary Restraining Order the Court of Appeals had issued.

Few seconds

Yambao arrived a few seconds after the flag ceremony, but he did not take the podium. Instead, he shook hands with some employees and went straight to his office.

Vicencio, who failed to show up, could not even be reached through his cell phone.

His legal counsel Bernardo Calderon, however, said that the TRO is "self-executory" and does not need another agency to implement the order.

Yambao was sworn in as acting mayor on April 25 after the DILG served Vicencio with a 60-day suspension order for his involvement in the allegedly anomalous purchase of an P88 million property in Navotas.

But the CA issued a TRO on the suspension on May 1, and Vicencio has vowed that he would reclaim his job from Yambao.

The situation has alarmed and confused City Hall employees, the city police and residents of Malabon.

Following the law

Yambao yesterday presided over a meeting with all the department heads inside the session hall and enjoined the employees to continue doing their jobs.

He said that he is still the lawful acting mayor, adding that he is just following what the law has prescribed.

"I will follow the law, but unfortunately, there are so many interpretations to it," Yambao said. "Let the court decide on this matter. But as far as I am concerned, I believe I have all the legal basis to take over as the acting mayor."

Addressing the employees confusion on who they should follow, Yambao said the employees are "free to do as they pleased."

But he warned that he would charge with insubordination city workers who would refuse to follow his orders and recognize him as the acting mayor.

He told the INQUIRER yesterday that he has been talking with Vicencio for the past three consecutive nights.

"We've been talking and both of us want a peaceful process. What we're both fighting for have legal basis. So I said if you think what you're fighting for is legal, go ahead. But I'll also stand for what I believe is right and legal. I'm here in this position because I was designated and I don't want to be accused of dereliction of duty," Yambao said.

Schools with SARS infection to be closed, warns DepEd

EDUCATION Secretary Edilberto de Jesus yesterday said any case of SARS infection in a school would automatically lead to the temporary closure of that school.

He also threatened to punish school officials who fail to report cases of infection to the government.

"We are warning any school that would try and hide any SARS case that they would be punished severely for doing so," he told reporters.

De Jesus issued the statement one month before the new school year begins. There has been a clamor to postpone the opening of classes from June to September.

He has also ordered educational institutions to boost their medical facilities to check the possible spread of the deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome virus among schoolchildren.

There have been two deaths from three SARS cases in the Philippines. The global death toll is about 450, with China and Hong Kong, the worst affected.

"We are asking all medical and health facilities of not only public schools, but private schools as well, to strengthen and give additional attention to their remedial health capabilities." *AFP*

PBA board fails to tackle NBN coverage

By Dennis U. Eroa

THE PBA Board of Governors discussed numerous issues but the pressing question on the fate of NBN-4's coverage wasn't tackled in its regular meeting last night at the league office in Pasig City.

PBA chair Jun Cabalan told the INQUIRER that the board will meet on Wednesday at the same venue to discuss the issue concerning the Letter of Credit issued by NBN-4.

"We talked about so many issues concerning the league but the LoC will be discussed substantially on Wednesday," said Cabalan.

Cabalan added the governors discussed among others the All-Star Weekend from May 30-June 1, budget, new guidelines for Fil-Ams and unrestricted free agents and the drug menace hitting the league.

Napolcom vows to take up cops' gripes on promotion

By Leila B. Salaverria

A NATIONAL Police Commission director yesterday vowed that the rift between the Manila's Finest Brotherhood Association Inc. and the Philippine National Police would soon come to an end.

Bernardo Calibo, personnel and administrative director of the Napolcom, said the commission, sitting en banc, would soon tackle the issue about the promotion of Manila's police officers and men who defended Malacañang during a labor day siege by supporters of deposed President Joseph Estrada three years ago.

"One of the issues to be discussed is the interpretation about whether the defense they made on May 1, 2001 should be factored in their regular promotion or be given a special promotion," Calibo said.

He added that the particular issue the Manila cops have brought up has had no exact precedent.

Calibo said that when the Napolcom has ruled on the issue, that will also be the end of the problem, since the commission has administrative control over the police and has the final say on its policies.

The MFBAI has been contesting a Philippine National Police policy that prohibits police officers from receiving a meritorious promotion after they have received their regular promotion in the same year.

The Manila cops have said that their promotion for the May 1 siege has long been delayed.

Philippine National Police Officials have said that a police officer cannot be promoted twice in one year.

Asked to comment on the friction between the MFBAI and the PNP, Calibo said it is only natural for both parties to have differences in opinion but that "it's part of maturity to find a common stand."

RITM acts to pacify nervous residents

By Christian V. Esguerra

OFFICIALS of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine have made a move to pacify nervous Muntinlupa residents who fear that the hospital's healthcare workers might be spreading Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS in the city.

RITM administrative officer Rodolfo Villarico said that the hospital will conduct this week a lecture focusing on the mode of transmission of SARS for residents of nearby Camella Subdivision and Pleasant Village.

"We really have to enlighten people on many things about SARS," Villarico told the INQUIRER yesterday. "We can't just allow them to fear even when there's nothing to fear about."

In a letter last week, village homeowners prevented RITM workers, including those who are not directly involved in the treatment of probable SARS cases, from entering the subdivision.

Villarico said the hospital had also received reports that some residents wanted the facility out of Muntinlupa.

"We had been here way before these villages arrived," RITM director Dr. Remigio Olveda said.

Established in 1981, RITM is the Health Department's primary facility for the treatment of infectious diseases .

STOP SARS ATTACK

SARS DOH OFFICIAL ADVISORY

TUESDAY 6 May 2003

LGUs MAY NOW USE CALAMITY FUNDS TO PREVENT SARS

Local Government Units (LGUs) may now use their calamity funds for the prevention of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) as the government launched the National Anti-SARS Consciousness and Clean-up Week on May 5-9.

In joint memorandum circular, local government and budget Secretaries Jose Lina and Emilia Boncodin authorized the utilization of the annual lump appropriations of LGUs for relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and other works or services in connection with pre-disaster activities such as the prevention of a SARS epidemic in the country.

"We can only prevent the upsurge of cases and deaths if we maintain clean surroundings particularly in a situation where the virus can survive in the environment for several hours," Health Seretary Manuel Dayrit stressed.

Q. I LEARNED FROM MY *KUMARE* THAT HER TWO KIDS WERE VACCINATED AGAINST PNEUMONIA AND INFLUENZA TO PREVENT THEM FROM ACQUIRING THE SARS VIRUS, I'M WONDERING IF I COULD DO THE SAME FOR MY OWN KIDS. CAN THESE VACCINES REALLY FIGHT OFF THE DREADED SARS?

A. NO! Vaccines against pneumonia and influenza cannot protect your children from acquiring SARS. Reports that these vaccines can fight SARS do not have any scientific basis. And since SARS is caused by a new virus, no vaccine has been developed yet.

Reported SARS cases in the Country
(March 17 - May 4, 2003)

SARS suspects,	total admitted	71
	total discharged	59
	still confined	12
SARS cases		3
SARS deaths		2
SARS Recovered/Cured		1

May 5-9
National Anti-SARS Consciousness and Clean-up Week

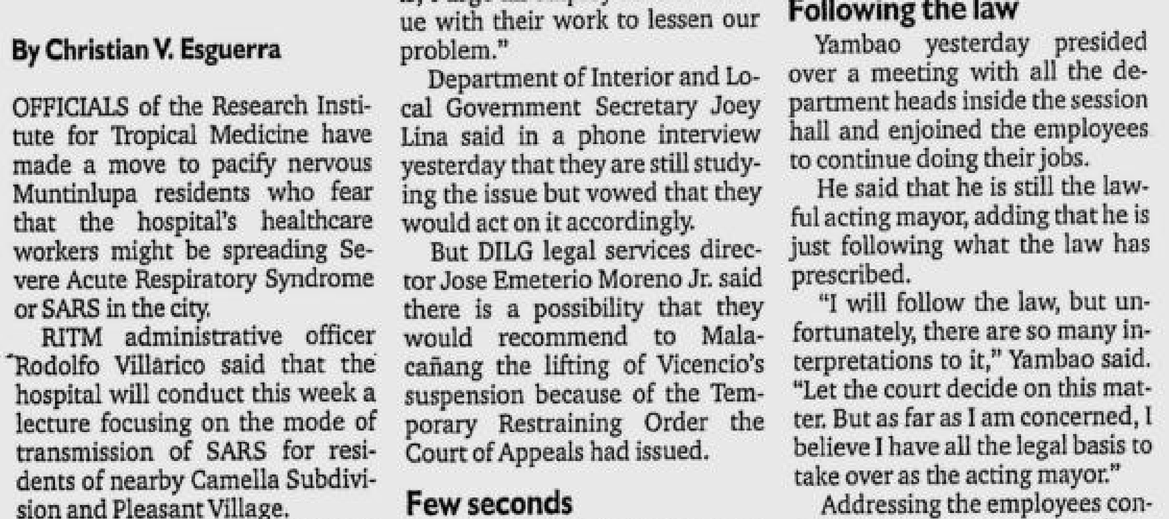
SARS HOTLINES: 741-7048 / 743-1937 or Type MED<space>SARS then send to 2333 for Globe subscribers or 257 for Smart users or text HOTLINE SARS <space> (Message) then send to 2900 or EMAIL: sars@doh.gov.ph

Metro will get 800 rookie cops

EIGHT hundred new policemen will be deployed to different districts in Metro Manila, according to National Capital Region Police Office Deputy Director Gen. Reynaldo Velasco.

He said the rookie cops had already proven their worth in implementing peace and order during the recent Labor Day celebration, which was the new cops' first assignment.

The 800 new cops are recent graduates of a three-month Public Safety Basic Recruit Course at the Philippine National Training Institute in Camp Vicente Lim, Calamba, Laguna. *Anne Luisa E. Villarico*



UNMASKED
Foreign businessmen arriving from Hongkong at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday have done away with facial masks that are supposed to help prevent the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. They claim to be free from SARS. ROGER MARGALLO

NHA tells rail dwellers: No need to worry

By Tina Santos

RESETTLEMENT and livelihood support will be given to the more than 2,800 rail dweller families in Malabon City.

This was the assurance given by the National Housing Authority yesterday to the families which will be affected by the modernization and rehabilitation of the Philippine National Railways.

NHA general manager Ed Pamintuan, in a statement, said they were now finalizing schemes for the implementation of the resettlement of the poor families.

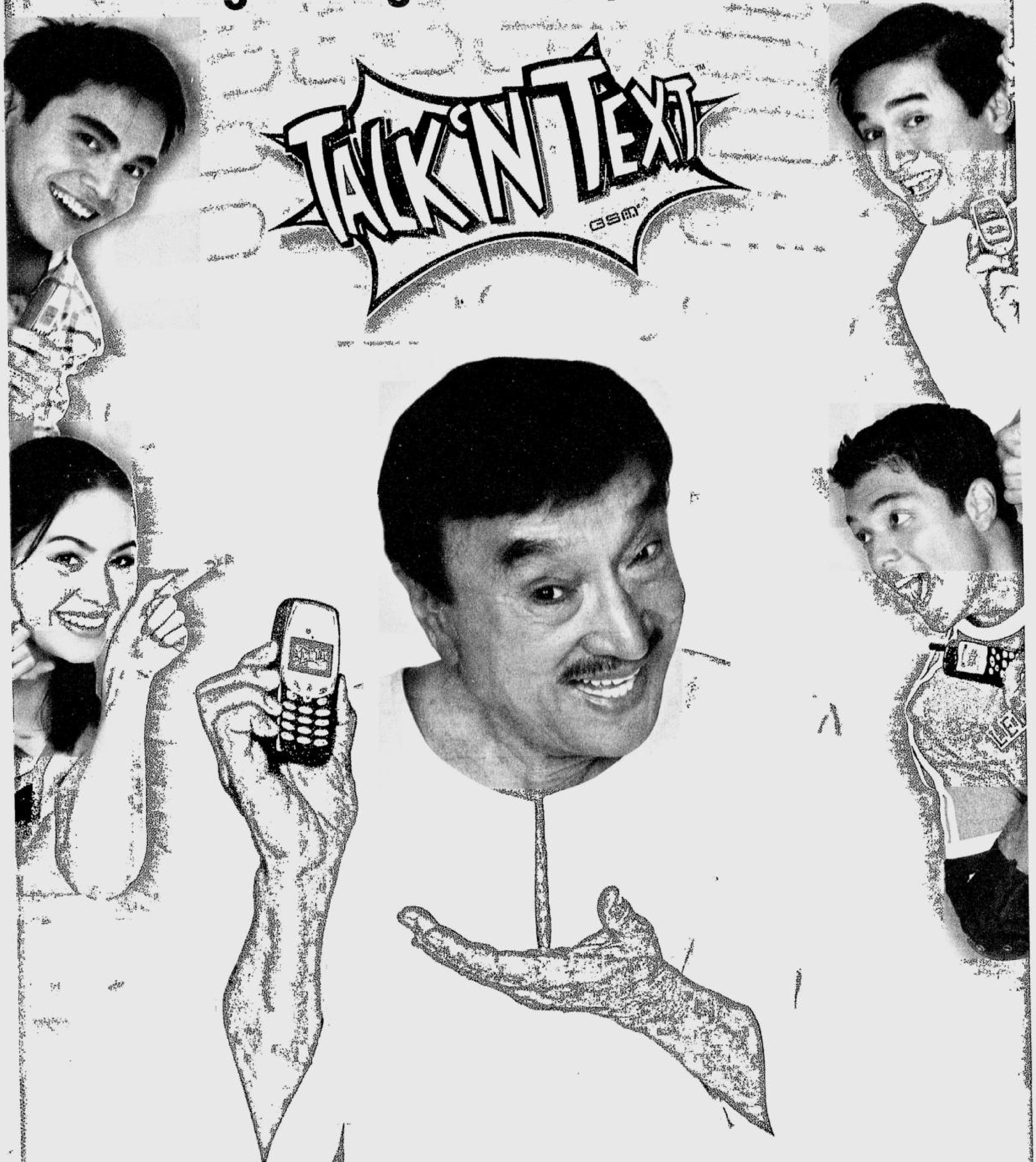
"I would like to assure that the welfare of the families occupying the PNR right-of-way in the city will be greatly taken care of," Pamintuan said.

The demolition of the residents' shanties—those occupying the 30-meter danger zone of the PNR railroad tracks in the city—will soon start as the government undertakes the North railway project to improve the mass transport system in the country.

Pamintuan said the affected families will be relocated in Tanza, Navotas, which has been identified by the city government and chosen by the residents themselves.

"The government is ensuring a smooth, peaceful and humane relocation of the affected families. They will be given much attention, afforded with just benefits and provided with livelihood packages and other relevant housing support," he added.

Ang idol ng barkada, tiwala sa



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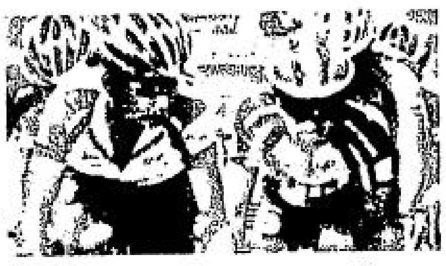
WHAT'S INSIDE

Mavs, Pistons pull through /A24



Luzon redeems self, wins Tour's 9th lap /A23

Rosales lands 7th, pockets P2.3M A22

TNT forward fails drug test

Latest offense forces compulsory testing of all PBA players

By Dennis U. Eroa

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball Association, rocked by twin drug scandals in less than a week, announced yesterday that another player, Norman Gonzales of Talk N' Text, has tested positive for banned substance.

GONZALES

Gonzales, a 6-foot-3 former national cager who was enjoying his finest season in the PBA, has been banned indefinitely, like Jimwell Torion and Alex Crisano, the two PBA drug offenders before him.

"As an added measure, all teams will now undergo regular, not random drug testing," PBA Commissioner Noli Eala announced.

A star out of San Beda College, Gonzales was found positive for amphitamine, according to the PBA Commissioner's Office.

"It's either shabu or Ecstacy, but he (Gonzales) didn't contest the laboratory report," a responsible PBA official, who requested anonymity, told the INQUIRER.

Although Eala had earlier maintained the random drug testing on players had been serving its purpose, the third straight serious drug case announced in 10 days' time left the PBA with no recourse but to go for a total check on all its active cagers.

Known for his rebounding and defensive skills, Gonzales, was tested before Talk N' Text's game against Alaska last April 30 at the Makati Coliseum.

The 26-year-old Gonzales, thus, joined a dubious list of drug offenders. Torion, the Red Bull point guard, and Crisano of Barangay Ginebra were sacked late last month for shabu.

Asi Taulava, Gonzales' teammate was earlier found positive for marijuana together with Dorian Peña of San Miguel Beer.

The PBA announced on April 25 Torion had tested positive for shabu based on tests done on his urine sample after the Red Bull game in Cebu on April 13. Five days later, the PBA said Crisano had also been found positive for banned substance.

Torion readily admitted the offense, unlike Crisano who contested the laboratory findings and claimed the substance found in his

TNT/ A23

No RP roots for Taulava, Peek, Hatfield, 2 others

By Christine O. Avendano

AT least five mainstays in the PBA, who formally claimed Filipino lineage, have no roots in the Philippines, the Senate committee on games, amusement and sports concluded as it wrapped up its hearings on the so-called Fil-Shams yesterday.

The Senate committee named the players whose documentation as half-Filipino was dubious as Asi Taulava, John Ordoño, Ali Peek, Dorian Peña, and Rudolf Hatfield.

Sen. Robert Barbers, chair of the Senate committee on games, said that his committee made an investigation and visited the place of birth of people that these players have claimed to be their relatives but couldn't find their birth, baptismal, residential "and even death certificates."

TAULAVA at the Senate yesterday. JESS YUSON

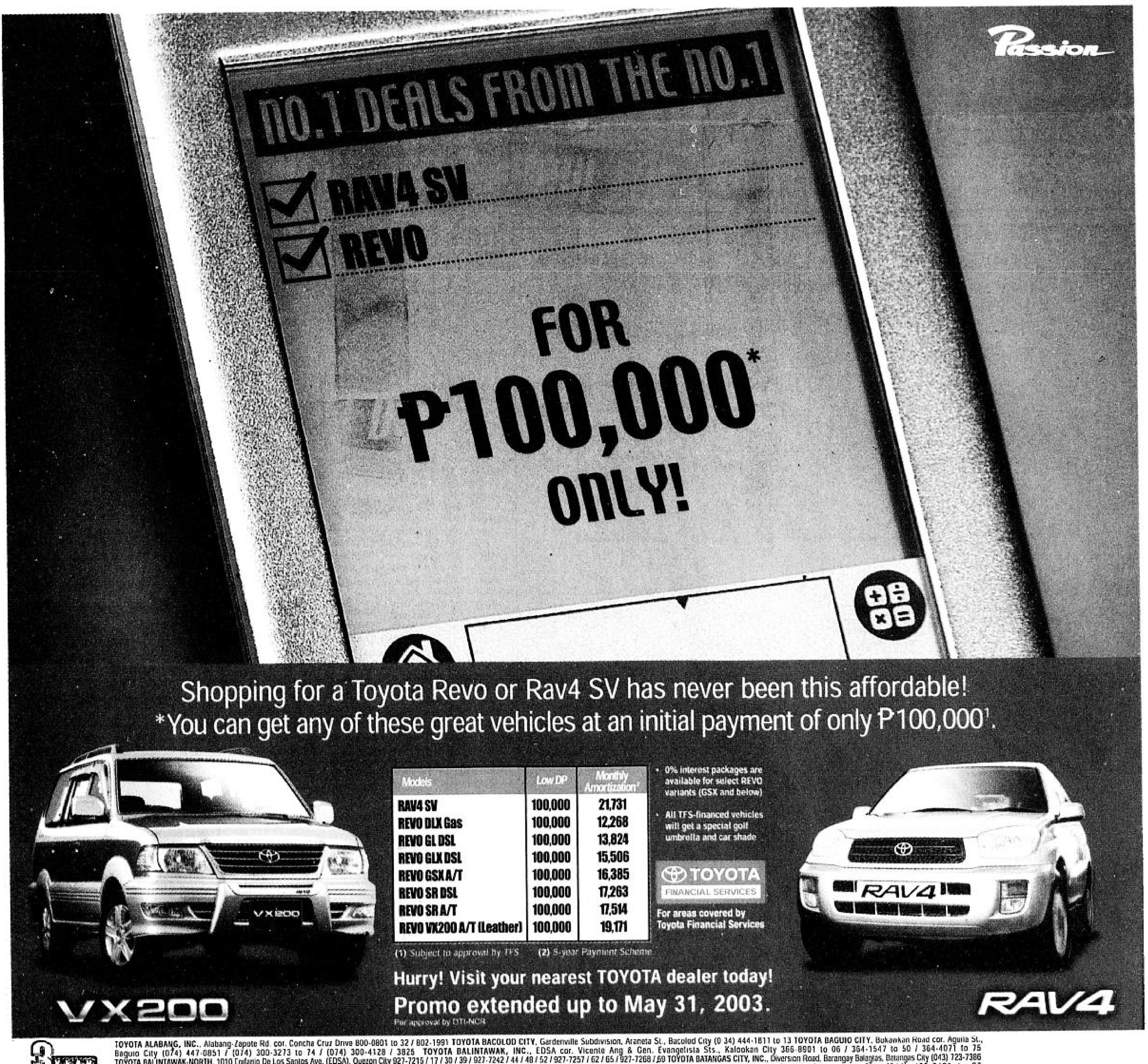
A highlight of yesterday's hearing was the admission of Yuri Del Valle, municipal civil registrar of San Jose, in Northern Samar that he helped fix the papers of Taulava upon the request of Don Raymundo "Boy" Daza, brother of former Samar congressman and now Gov. Raul Daza.

Del Valle admitted he violated National Statistics Office policy when he certified that his registrar had records of the birth and death certificates of Taulava's s grandmother "when in fact there were none."

Del Valle said he did what he did because Daza was related to the former congressman and now governor of Samar.

"Who could refuse the brother of a former congressman?" Del Valle said during the hearing.

NO RP/ A23



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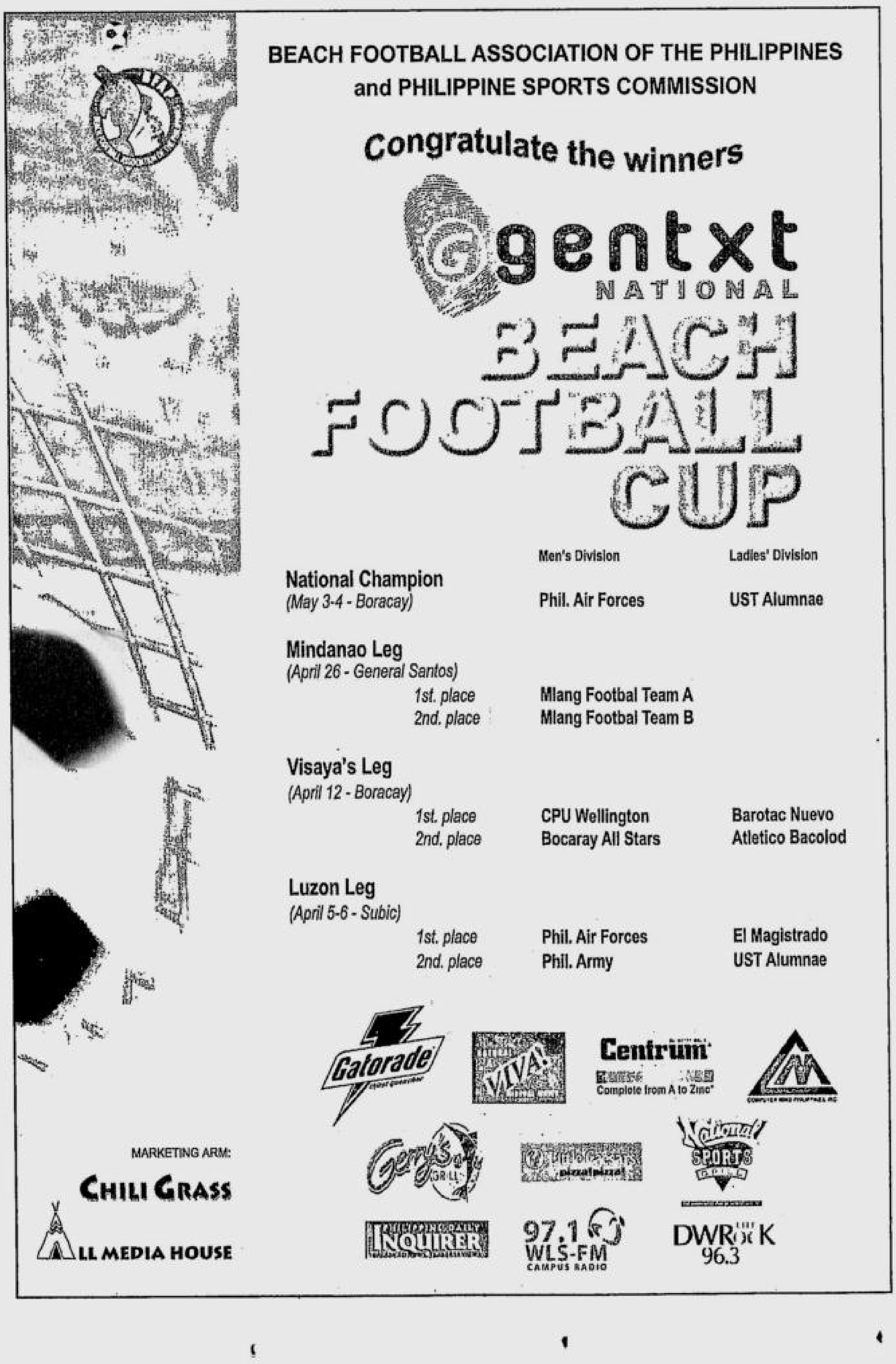

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Visaya's Leg (April 12 - Boracay)	1st. place	CPU Wellington	Barotac Nuevo
	2nd. place	Bocaray All Stars	Atletico Bacolod
Luzon Leg (April 5-6 - Subic)	1st. place	Phil. Air Forces	El Magistrado
	2nd. place	Phil. Army	UST Alumnae

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DWROCK 96.3

JENNIFER Rosales, making an assortment of magical shots including one for an eagle, registered her best finish of the young LPGA season by placing seventh after a closing two-under-par 69 Sunday in the Michelob Light Open in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Despite an eagle-3 on the par-5 No. 7, Rosales still needed a lot of short-game brilliance on a trying day where she hit only nine greens in regulation to secure her third Top 10 showing in the first six events of 2003.

Grace Park of Korea rolled in a 20-foot putt for par on the 18th to beat Karrie Webb, Lorena Ochoa and Cristie Kerr by a stroke with her 275 aggregate for 54 holes.

Rosales, whose chip-in for birdie on the 18th in the third round made it to CNN's Shot of the Day shown worldwide yesterday, wound up with a big windfall of $44,886 (about P2.33 million). That was a lot more than the $3,869 (about P200,000) won by her elder brother Gerald in placing 26th in the Maekyung Open at the Nam Seoul Country Club also on Sunday. Gerald shot a 71 for a 287 total, 12 behind the winning score of Korean Chung Joon.

The big finish also brought Jenny's season earnings to $115,961 and moved her four rungs higher to 24th from 28th in the money list which Se Ri Pak continues to lead.

PARK (right) jumps into the arms of her caddy Dave Brooke after winning the inaugural Michelob Light Open. REUTERS

Pa finished a stroke behind Jenny, joining Juli Inkster, Patricia Meunier-Lebouc and Hee-won Han in eighth place at 280.

Fil-Am Dorothy Delasin also salvaged a respectable 17th place finish, carding a 70-283. She won $19,755.

After missing a lot of birdie putts in the first three rounds, Rosales got a big lift from her putter in the final round as she salvaged par seven times.

With her big start, Jenny has already exceeded both her earnings in her rookie year ($109,075) and in 2001 ($94,879). She won $342,887 in placing 30th in the money list last year but with the way the Pagcor and American Eye Center endorser is playing, a bigger season seemed ahead for her. Jong Arcano

The scores:

275 - Grace Park 67-68-69-71, $240,000

276 - Karrie Webb 70-71-68-67, Lorena Ochoa, 66-69-72-69, Cristie Kerr, 69-68-68-71, $110,601@

277 - Mi-Hyun Kim 69-69-71-68, $65,542

278 - Annika Sorenstam 68-70-70-70, $53,625

279 - Jennifer Rosales 69-69-72-69 $44,886

280 - Juli Inkster 73-69-69-69, Se Ri Pak 69-69-70-72, Patricia Meunier-Lebouc 69-68-71-72, Hee-Won Han 67-72-68-73, $34,161@

Flesch captures HP Classic

NEW ORLEANS—Steve Flesch won for the first time in his career Sunday, capping an impressive comeback with a 35-foot birdie putt on the first playoff hole at the HP Classic of New Orleans.

Flesch, who began the day seven shots behind leader Scott Verplank, shot a final-round 65 to finish tied with Bob Estes at 21-under 267.

Verplank held a two-stroke lead with four holes to play, but bogeyed 16 and double-bogeyed 18 to finish a 2-over 74. He ended up third at 19-under.

Flesch joined Mike Weir as the only left-handers to win on tour this year. Weir has won three times, including the Masters last month.

AP

Superal fires 69

WOLEN Juan Superal fired a 31 in his first nine holes en route to a three-under 69 yesterday that gave him a double-digit lead like Dottie Ardina in the opening round of the Samsung Jungolf Tour at the Sherwood Hills Golf Club course.

Superal, poised to pick up a sixth straight win in boys Class D this week, was on track to breaking the record 64 he set last week at the Orchard with his five birdies in the back nine until he got struck by two double-bogeys coming home.

The big guns in the other divisions returned from a week-long rest and while Dottie Ardina pulled away early, the others encountered rough sailing. Ardina's 78 ushered her to a 17-stroke lead with Katya dela Cruz far behind at 95.

Miko Alejandro was up by two over Allan Guy in boys Class B, Bino Dela Paz had a five-shot lead over JP de Claro in the boys Class E while Kristina Potenciano had a 91 to go up in girls Class E.

Also leading in the other divisions were Justin Tambunting and Aaron Dimabuyo with their 78s in boys Class A, Bambi dela Paz (90) in girls Class B and Jik Jik Abdon (78) and Crystal Faith Superal (79) in Class C. *Jong Arcano*

BASEBALL RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE–Detroit 7, Tampa Bay 3; Oakland 2, NY Yankees 0; Toronto 8, Anaheim 2; Kansas City 4, Baltimore 0; Minnesota 9, Boston 4; Cleveland 3, Texas 1; Seattle 5, Chicago White Sox 1 (5 1/2 innings, rain).

NATIONAL LEAGUE–St. Louis 6, Montreal 2; Houston 5, Florida 2; NY Mets 5, Milwaukee 3; Chicago Cubs 5, Colorado 4 (10 innings); Los Angeles 3, Pittsburgh 2; San Francisco 6, Cincinnati 1; Philadelphia 3, San Diego 1; Atlanta 7, Arizona 4 (11 innings).

SPORTSWATCH

PSA 50-cock derby lures big field

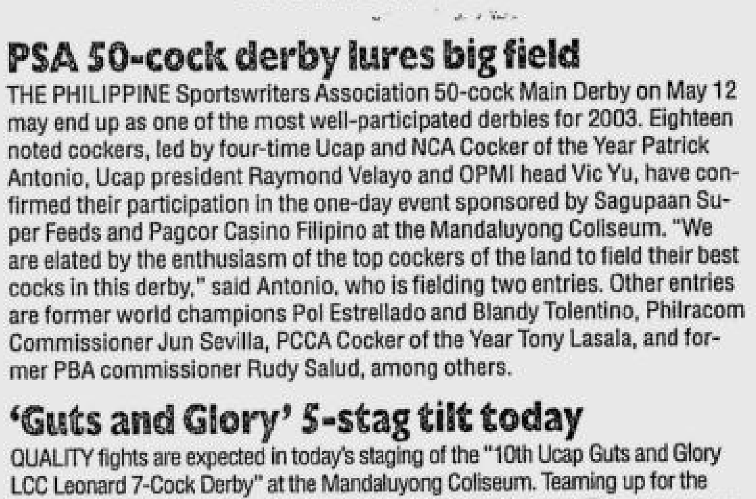
THE PHILIPPINE Sportswriters Association 50-cock Main Derby on May 12 may end up as one of the most well-participated derbies for 2003. Eighteen noted cockers, led by four-time Ucap and NCA Cocker of the Year Patrick Antonio, Ucap president Raymond Velayo and OPMI head Vic Yu, have confirmed their participation in the one-day event sponsored by Sagupaan Super Feeds and Pagcor Casino Filipino at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. "We are elated by the enthusiasm of the top cockers of the land to field their best cocks in this derby," said Antonio, who is fielding two entries. Other entries are former world champions Pol Estrellado and Blandy Tolentino, Philracom Commissioner Jun Sevilla, PCCA Cocker of the Year Tony Lasala, and former PBA commissioner Rudy Salud, among others.

'Guts and Glory' 5-stag tilt today

QUALITY fights are expected in today's staging of the "10th Ucap Guts and Glory LCC Leonard 7-Cock Derby" at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. Teaming up for the two-day derby are Alex Tang of Bicol, Nelson Co and LCC Group. The sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Lakpue Drug's Washout Shampoo. Leading the field are former ambassador Danding Cojuangco and legendary breeder Richard Bates. Meanwhile, the following derbies are also scheduled this month: PSA Challenge 50-Cock Main Derby (Sagupaan Dream Team Versus Ucap Champions), May 12; Spider 5-Cock Derby (May 13, Nestor Alcala); 6-Cock One Day Derby (May 15, Mayor Vic Amante and LCC); 11th Ucap Arnis Master 7-Cock Derby (May 22 and 24, Raymond Velayo); 4-Cock Derby (May 27, Goody and Ariel) and 4-Cock Derby (May 29, Abu Centeno).

8 straight titles for San Beda Cubs

EIGHT straight titles, including the National Inter-secondary championship. This will be the legacy of Batch 2003 of the San Beda Red Cubs as they leave the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Their last title came in the 2003 Sunkist Youth Basketball Championships last April 11 at the Makati Coliseum. The Red Cubs' claim to their last crown drew mixed emotions from the coaching staff led by Edmundo ``Ato'' Badolato after they nearly duplicated the feat of Batch 1996, which was spearheaded by Ren Ren Ritualo that year. The members of the Fila-outfitted team are Jayfelson Agbayani, Arvin Braganza, Yuri Escueta, Jayvee Escueta, Calgar Condevillmar, Michael Baldos, Enrico Tirona, Mon Arce, Raphael Mendiola, Jeff de Guzman, Nikko Ortega, Jeff Gomez, Rogemar Menor, Claiford Arao, Jerome Villanueva and Michael Cruz. Team manager Rajan Gidwani and FIBL Commissioner Dilip Budhrani said they were proud of the rare achievement of the Cubs this year.



SWIMMING CLINIC
Multi-awarded swimmer Em-Em Velasco (left), a PSA and Scoop awardee, teaches a young participant during her swimming clinic at the Rizal Racket Club pool in Pasig. The clinic ends June 10. Interested parties may call 633-0480.

Luzon snares Tour's 9th lap

Tanguilig new threat to Ramos

By June Navarro

VIGAN—Bernard Luzon redeemed himself from a disastrous ride Sunday to capture yesterday's ninth lap even as Rhyan Tanguilig displaced Arnel Quirimit as main challenger of overall leader Merculio Ramos in the Tour Pilipinas 2003 bikathon.

Luzon, who crashed out of the Magic 10 after struggling home 49th in the long Olongapo-Dagupan run the other day, reclaimed his old spot as sixth overall by sustaining a solo breakaway in the last eight kilometers of the 206-km drive.

He took a spill on a slippery stretch some 300 meters from the finish, but Luzon quickly got up and ruled the lap with a time of four hours, 44 minutes and 53 seconds.

Michael Primero finished second, 7.42 seconds behind Luzon, while eighth-lap winner Felix Celeste salvaged third place over Tanguilig, who was greatly rewarded for his aggressive finish.

With Quirimit forced to keep Ramos company, Tanguilig jumped from fourth to second overall, just a minute 40 seconds behind the Tour's leading rider.

Enrique Domingo, one of the 12 national riders here and winner of the seventh lap, kept third place, two minutes and 21 seconds behind Ramos. Quirimit remained 2:41 behind Ramos with Davadilla staying fifth, 9:41 off the pace.

Domingo checked in with the day's 12-man fifth group, 3:27.87 behind Luzon, while Ramos, Quirimit and Davadila finished together in the eight-member sixth group, 6:43.38 off the lap winner.

Luzon took over the old slot of Joseph Millanes, who dropped to 12th. Rounding out the top 10 list were Placido Valdez (seventh), Lito Atilano (eighth), Lloyd Reynante (ninth) and two-time champion Renato Dolosa (10th).

After Luzon's breakaway in Bantay, Ilocos Norte, Primero and Celeste mounted a chase but the Patrol 117 skipper had taken a huge lead that proved too much to overcome.

"I struck a deal with Felix (Celeste) and the other riders that in order to improve our standings, we must help each other out," said Luzon, who trails Ramos by 11 minutes in the race for the P200,000 individual champion's purse.

Ramos retained the overall leadership with an aggregate time of 33 hours, 45 minutes and 19 seconds in the race that saw a second rider withdraw due to a sore knee.

Jecky Barantes of the Drugbusters alighted from his bike and rode on the Sag Wagon just three kilometers after the neutral start in Damortis, La Union, complaining of intolerable pain in his right knee.

THE LEAD pack, including Felix Celeste and Bernard Luzon, passes by pottery shops at Barangay Tabo in San Juan, La Union during yesterday's 9th lap of the 2003 Tour Pilipinas.

VAL HANDUMON

Overall Standings

RANK	RIDER			TIME
1	MERCULIO	RAMOS	SAM	33h45'19.292
2	RHYAN	TANGUILIG	PAG	00h01'40.360
3	ENRIQUE	DOMINGO	POS	00h02'21.281
4	ARNEL	QUIRIMIT	TAN	00h02'41.978
5	WARREN	DAVADILLA	INT	00h09'41.650
6	BERNARD	LUZON	PAT	00h11'25.849
7	PLACIDO	VALDEZ	DRU	00h13'16.510
8	LITO	ATILANO	GIL	00h14'07.259
9	LLOYD	REYNANTE	PAG	00h14'55.939
10	RENATO	DOLOSA	GIL	00h15'02.020
11	SANTI	BARNACHEA	BOW	00h15'38.690
12	RONALD	GORRANTES	ECO	00h15'57.970
13	JOSEPH	MILLANES	TAN	00h16'11.051
14	ALFIE	CATALAN	BOW	00h17'52.150
15	FELIX	CELESTE	VAT	00h17'56.682

9TH LAP STANDINGS

1	BERNARD	LUZON	PAT	04h44'53.620
2	MICHAEL	PRIMERO	GIL	00h00'07.42
3	FELIX	CELESTE	VAT	00h00'18.07
4	RHYAN	TANGUILIG	PAG	same
5	VIRGILIO	MUENA	PLD	00h03'05.74

RANK	RIDER			TIME
6	ALFIE	CATALAN	BOW	00h03'27.87
7	LLOYD	REYNANTE	PAG	same
8	LITO	ATILANO	GIL	same
9	PLACIDO	VALDEZ	DRU	same
10	ENRIQUE	DOMINGO	POS	same

TEAM STANDINGS

PL	TEAM	TIMED	DEFICIT
1	POSTMEN	19h29'00.4	111,113,116,112
2	INTEL	19h31'47.7	5,1,3,6
3	GILBEYS ISLAND PUNCH	19h34'32.3	33,32,31,35
4	PAGCORSPORTS	19h42'28.9	71,72,76,74
5	PATROL 117	19h42'40.8	61,67,65,62
6	PLDT-NDD	19h42'41.0	95,91,97,93
7	ECO SAVERS	19h44'38.6	23,24,22,21
8	DRUG BUSTERS	19h45'38.7	41,42,44,47
9	SAMSUNG	19h46'58.6	101,103,102,105
10	VAT RIDERS	19h51'58.6	81,86,83,84
11	TANDUAY RHUM RIDERS	19h52'09.7	51,53,52,54
12	BOWLING GOLD	19h56'00.6	12,11,13,15

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MAY 06 TUESDAY 421-6738

No RP roots...

From page A21

Barbers also said in the hearing that a check made by his committee showed that the Hernandez clan of Samar, to which Taulava said he was also related, had denied such kinship.

In yesterday's hearing, Barbers said his committee couldn't find papers of the grandmother of Taulava in Northern Samar; the grandparents of Ordoño in La Union; Peek's grandfather in Makati; Peña's grandfather in Negros Occidental and Hatfield's grandfather in La Union.

Meanwhile, Sen. John Osmeña told the committee hearing he had information that the woman claiming that Eric Menk was her son was an impostor and sought that a DNA test be conducted on the two.

The senator said his committee would collate all documentation given to them by the Fil-Am players whose Filipino citizenship is under question.

"We will start tomorrow collating the evidence and work to have a strong and convincing committee report," Barbers told reporters later.

Also during the hearing, PBA Commissioner Noli Eala disclosed that the body plans to hold a "one-time" and "unscheduled" mandatory drug testing for all PBA players.

TNT forward...

From page A21

urine sample was obviously from food supplements he was taking.

Yesterday, PBA technical director Perry Martinez said Crisano has yet to formally dispute the drug findings.

"From what I know, the supplement he mentioned was similar to those being taken by other cagers, who all tested negative for banned substance," Martinez told the INQUIRER.

National team assistant coach Dong Vergeire, who mentored Gonzales at San Beda, was surprised when told of the news.

"Norman is not the type of guy who will use drugs. I am surprised and saddened. I hope that the report isn't true," said Vergeire.

Gonzales played second fiddle to Romel Adducul and Danny Ildefonso when the Philippine national team, coached by Vergeire, competed in the 1997 Seaba championship in Singapore.

He failed to win a championship ring for San Beda in the NCAA and played for the Pampanga Dragons in the now-defunct MBA. Gonzales was drafted by Talk N' Text (formerly Mobiline) two years ago.

Greeks win Fiba crown

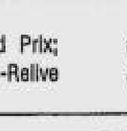
THESSALONIKI, Greece—Greece's Aris Salonika was crowned FIBA European club basketball champions on Sunday after a stirring late comeback in the Final Four title game earned a last-gasp 84-83 win over Poland's Prokom Trefl.

Next weekend, Barcelona stages the rival Final Four of the the breakaway Euroleague, featuring the more familiar names of Barcelona, Benetton Treviso, CSKA Moscow as well as newcomers Montepaschi Siena.

Reuters

SPORTSTV

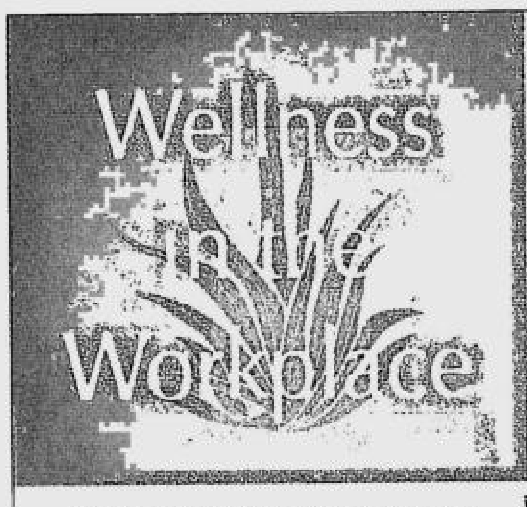
Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat



BASKETBALL: Lakers vs Spurs, Game 1, 9:30 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports-San Antonio swept LA during the regular season. Will back-to-back MVP Tim Duncan continue to dominate Shaq and company?

MOTOR SPORTS: Spanish Grand Prix; 8:30 a.m. (r); Star Sports-Relive Michael Schumacher's most recent triumph on board Ferrari's new car in the Circuit de Catalunya.

TENNIS: Telecom Italia Masters, First Round; 12 noon (r), 9 p.m. and 11 p.m.; Star Sports-Hard court tennis action featuring the likes of Andre Agassi continues in Italy.



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DR. LEONORA PANLASIGUI, scientist and Professor of Nutritional Sciences, nutritional consultant of several companies, and author of books and international journals. She teaches Food Science and Nutrition at the University of the Philippines, and has lectured in local and international conferences, seminars and scientific meetings.

DR. JOSE RAUL CANLAS, Doctor of Sports Medicine and Orthopedic Surgery, Section Chief for Sports Medicine in St. Luke's Medical Center. He was head of the medical team for the last Olympic and Asian games, and is Team Physician for Philippine delegations and other sports teams.

VIVIAN ZAPANTA, certified fitness instructor of Asian Development Bank and San Miguel Corporation, as well as personal trainer of prominent personalities. She has lectured on fitness and health to organizations, private corporations and universities.

CORY QUIRINO, TV host of the longest-running lifestyle magazine show in the Philippines, wellness columnist, and author. She has also given lectures on total wellness.

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- Ergonomics and injury prevention
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-Masters in Public Health, Columbia University
Dr. Lolit Suplido
-Specialist in Internal Medicine
-Associate Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Philippines Open University
-Consultant for the Healix Foundation, an occupational and environmental health group
Dr. Aguedo Troy Gepte
-Specialist in Epidemiology
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-Masters in Public Health, Institute for Community and Family Health

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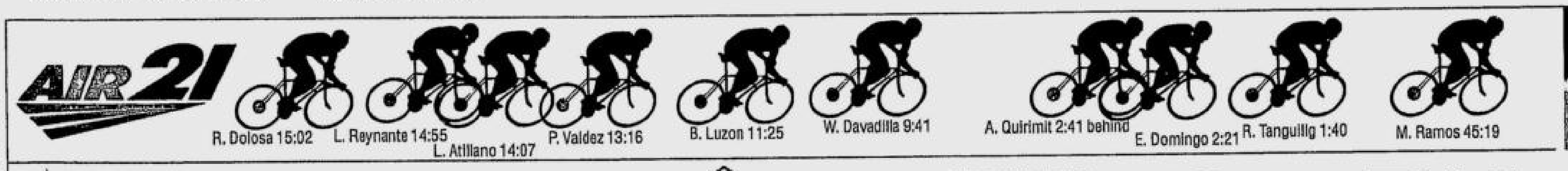

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AT A GLANCE

NBA PLAYOFFS 2003

SECOND ROUND

Eastern Conference

(1) Detroit vs. (4) Philadelphia

Pistons 0, Sixers 0
Game 1 at Detroit (May 7, TBD)
Game 2 at Detroit (May 9, TBD)
Game 3 at Philadelphia (TBD)
Game 4 at Philadelphia (TBD)
*Game 5 at Detroit (TBD)
*Game 6 at Philadelphia (TBD)
*Game 7 at Detroit (TBD)

(2) New Jersey vs (6) Boston

Nets 0, Celtics 0
Game 1 at New Jersey (May 6, 7 am)
Game 2 at New Jersey (May 8, 7 am)
Game 3 at Boston (TBD)
Game 4 at Boston (TBD)
*Game 5 at New Jersey (TBD)
*Game 6 at Boston (TBD)
*Game 7 at New Jersey (TBD)

WESTERN CONFERENCE

(1) San Antonio vs (5) LA Lakers

Spurs 0, Lakers 0
Game 1 at San Antonio (May 6, 9:30 am)
Game 2 at San Antonio (May 8, 9:30 am)
Game 3 at Los Angeles (May 10,10:30 am)
Game 4 at Los Angeles (May 12,3:30 am)
*Game 5 at San Antonio (May 14, TBD)
*Game 6 at Los Angeles (May 16, TBD)
*Game 7 at San Antonio (May 18, TBD)

(2) Sacramento vs (3) Dallas

Kings 0, Mavs 0
Game 1at Dallas (May 7, 9 am)
Game 2 at Dallas (May 9, 9:30 am)
Game 3 at Sacramento (May 10, 9:30 am)
Game 4 at Sacramento (May 12, 10:30 am)
*Game 5 at Dallas (May 14, TBD)
*Game 6 at Sacramento (May 16, TBD)
*Game 7 at Dallas (May 18, TBD)

* If necessary
TBD (To Be Determined)

NBA BRIEFS

MJ to Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—Michael Jordan is interested in a possible role with the Charlotte expansion team and has talked recently with owner Robert Johnson about buying in as a partner, The Associated Press has learned. Johnson and Jordan have a publicly acknowledged friendship and have spoken frequently in recent years. But talks between the two men over the past three weeks have been different, including preliminary discussions over doing business together on the team Johnson bought last December for $300 million. "He and Bob have been talking," a source with knowledge of the discussions told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity. The as-yet-unnamed team will begin play in the 2004-05 season. The news of Jordan's possible involvement in Charlotte comes amid reports that his relationship with the Washington Wizards has deteriorated to the point where he and the franchise might part ways. *AP*

Hornets coach fired

NEW ORLEANS—Paul Silas was fired as coach of the New Orleans Hornets on Sunday after five seasons in which he set the franchise record for victories. The Hornets went 47-35 this season, finishing third in the Central Division. They were knocked out of the playoffs Friday night, eliminated in the first round in six games by the Philadelphia 76ers. Silas said he received a phone call Sunday from team co-owner Ray Wooldridge, who said the Hornets would not renew his contract. He leaves with an overall mark of 208-155 with the Hornets, who moved from Charlotte to New Orleans after last season. Silas took the Hornets to the playoffs each of the past four seasons, but they never advanced beyond the second round. *AP*

Mavs, Pistons eliminate foes

DALLAS—Dirk Nowitzki rebounded from his worst playoff game ever to score 31 points and haul down 11 rebounds as the Dallas Mavericks defeated the stubborn Portland Trail Blazers 107-95 in NBA playoff action Sunday.

The win gave Dallas the best-of-seven Western Conference opening series 4-3, as the Trail Blazers came up just short in their attempt to come back from a 3-0 series deficit.

In the day's other game, the Detroit Pistons completed an impressive series comeback to overcome the Orlando Magic 108-93, for a 4-3 series win.

No team in NBA history has won a series after losing the first three games, but Portland almost did, winning three straight games and then holding a 90-88 lead with less than five minutes remaining in Game Seven.

But the Mavericks pulled ahead on clutch shots from Nowitzki, Steve Nash and Nick Van Exel down the stretch to finally close the series out.

Dallas will meet Sacramento, the team that knocked them out of the playoffs last season, in the second round starting on Tuesday night in Dallas.

Van Exel added 26 points to the Dallas attack, while Nash had 21 points, seven assists and six rebounds.

Michael Finley chipped in 14 points and eight rebounds as Dallas outscored Portland 36-22 in the fourth quarter.

Nowitzki didn't have a rebound in 26 minutes in Game Six and atoned for his miserable effort in that game with a stellar performance in Game Seven.

"Our backs were against the wall, we didn't want to go on vacation yet," Nowitzki said. "I came out to try and get every rebound I could and it worked out."

Damon Stoudemire had 17 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Trail Blazers, who roared back from the 3-0 deficit to make it a thrilling seven-game series.

Rasheed Wallace also had 17 points for Portland, while Zach Randolph had 14 points and 10 rebounds.

Pistons 108, Magic 93

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Chauncey Billups scored 37 points as the Detroit Pistons completed their comeback win over the Orlando Magic in Game Seven of their Eastern Conference opening round series.

Detroit became just the seventh team in NBA history to rally from a 3-1 series deficit as the Pistons won the best-of-seven series 4-3.

Detroit will meet the Philadelphia 76ers in the second round of the playoffs.

The Pistons also avoided becoming just the third number one seed to lose in the first round of the playoffs since the NBA went to a 16-team playoff format in 1982.

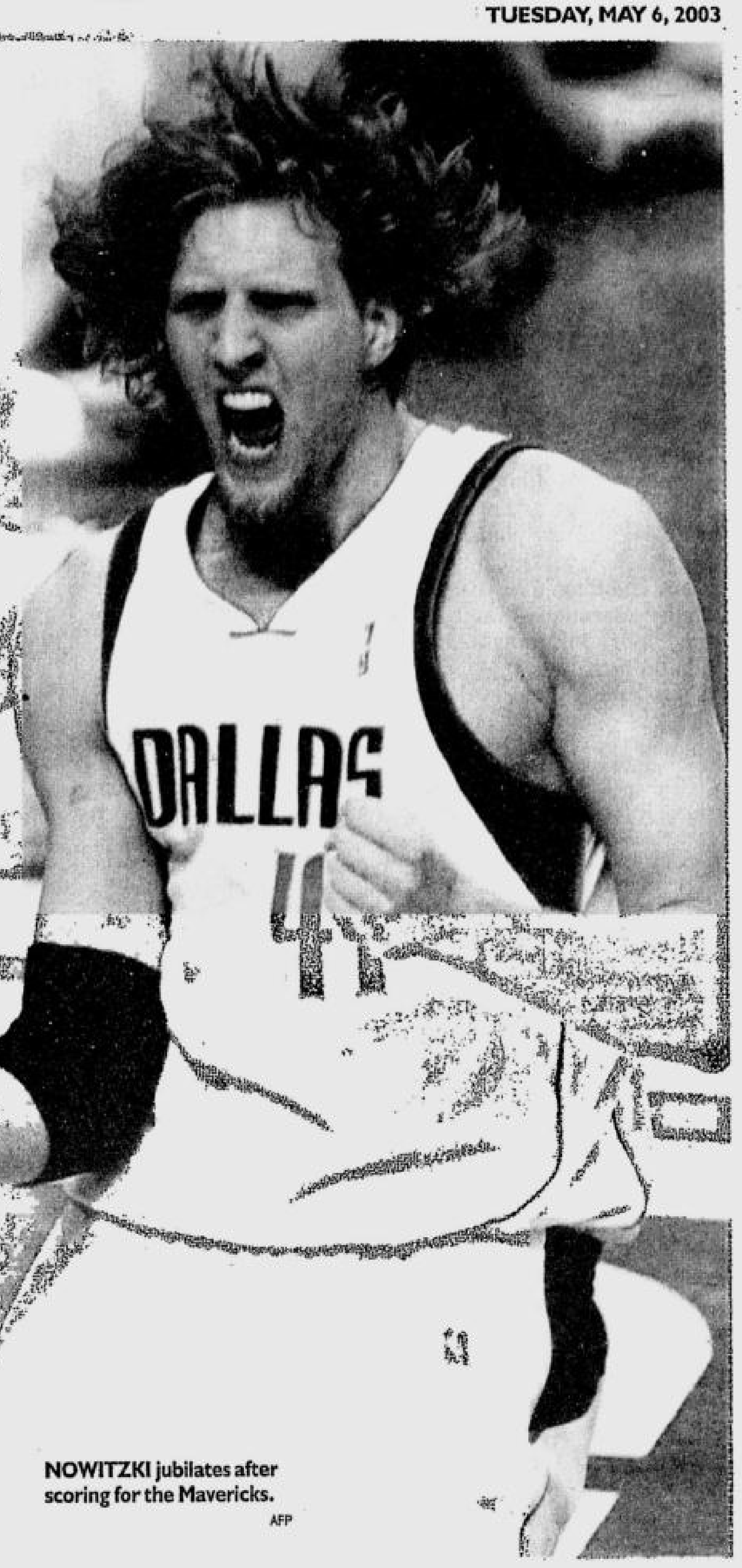
Richard Hamilton added 22 points for the Pistons, while Tayshaun Prince scored a career-high 20.

Ben Wallace added seven points, 12 rebounds, five assists and five blocks. *Reuters*

Semis live on Solar

SOLAR Sports will telecast Game One of the Los Angeles Lakers-San Antonio Spurs best-of-seven NBA Western Conference semifinals series live at 9:30 a.m. today (Tuesday, May 6). The replay will be at 8 p.m.

On Wednesday, Solar Sports will feature Game One of the other blockbuster West semifinals pitting the Sacramento Kings and the Dallas Mavericks live at 9 a.m. (replay 8 p.m.).



NOWITZKI jubilates after scoring for the Mavericks.
AFP

Capsule previews of NBA 2nd round playoffs

EASTERN CONFERENCE
No. 1 DETROIT (50-32, 4-3) vs No. 4 PHILADELPHIA (48-34, 4-2)

Season series: Tied, 2-2, with each team winning once on the other's home court. In one meeting, Ben Wallace had nine blocks as Detroit won by 28. In another, Allen Iverson fouled out for the first time in more than three years.

Storyline: The Pistons had to win the final three games of the first round against Orlando to advance, while the 76ers got past New Orleans in six games. Both teams rely heavily on defense.

Key matchup I: Chauncey Billups vs. Eric Snow. The Pistons' point guard capped a great series by scoring 37 points in Game 7 against Orlando, but he'll now go up against one of the top defensive point guards in the East. Both players are superb free throw shooters, with Billups the better all-around shooter and scorer.

Prediction: 76ers in 6.

No. 2 NEW JERSEY (49-33, 4-2) vs. No. 6 BOSTON (44-38, 4-2)

Season Series: Nets won 3-1, with Boston's win coming way back on Nov. 20, when the since-departed Shammond Williams led the Celtics with 21 points. The Nets won the other games by 35, 15 and 13.

Storyline: A rematch of last season's Eastern Conference finals, which the Nets won on the road in Game 6.

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Prediction: Nets in 5.

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Season series: Kings won, 3-1, with the Mavericks winning the final matchup 129-123 in overtime to snap a six-game losing streak against Sacramento. The Kings defeated Dallas 4-1 in last year's playoffs.

Storyline: Watch 'em pile up the points, and watch to see if Dallas plays any defense. The Mavs' defense was so shoddy in last year's playoff series that Dallas owner Mark Cuban hung a banner at the team's practice facility.

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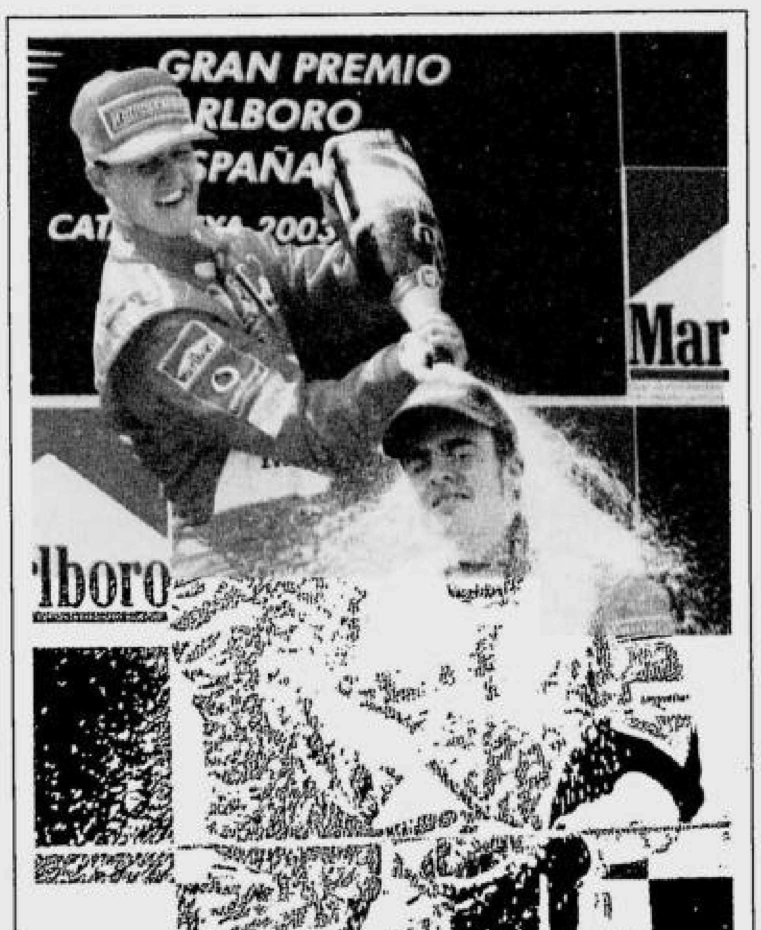
Key matchup II: Mike Bibby vs. Steve Nash.

Prediction: Kings in 4. *AP*



CHAMPAGNE DOUSE
German Formula One driver and world champion Michael Schumacher (left) sprays champagne over Spanish driver Fernando Alonso at the end of the Spanish Grand Prix last Sunday. Schumacher made the most of a McLaren nightmare at the Spanish Grand Prix, sweeping to victory in Barcelona for the fifth time in his career and third year in a row. Alonso placed second.
REUTERS

Surviving more than winning

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THE REAL writers of history are the survivors. I say real because they usually make a more accurate account of an event than neither the winners nor the losers.

In beating the Portland Trail Blazers yesterday, the Dallas Mavericks looked more like survivors than winners. For even as they advanced to the next round, the Mavericks didn't exactly appear like conquering heroes; they merely survived the war. A Mav making an entry in the official NBA slum book of the Dallas win would probably begin the report with this: "The Dallas Mavericks evaded the ignominy of becoming the first NBA team to lose a playoff in 7 games after winning the first three games of the series."

He'd be justified doing that.

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In another vein, was there a winner in the infamous Death March from Bataan to Capas, Tarlac?

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Dave Borje, a journalist of note, was among the survivors of the Death March. Dave had this limp as a result of a shrapnel wound he suffered in the last war. But he was tough as nail. At 70, Dave could out-walk people much younger than him. When he could still play golf not too long ago, Dave and I had some happy occasions each time we were paired off in a round. If he tries to write a book about the Death March (he might have written one already?), I'm sure it'd be a hit. If he'd do one if he hadn't done one yet, he'd be justified coming up with this first sentence: "The Death March reaffirmed my belief that there is God. I know. I was there."

Survivors, like Pigafetta in the Magellan expedition to the Philippines in the 16th century, are historically the most accurate and therefore the best chroniclers of an event.

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Portland was still in the game as the Blazers rallied to within 95-100, 1:18 remaining.

But Steve Nash, the deadly 6-foot-3 guard, hit a jumper from the side, triggering a 7-0 Dallas windup Nash and Dirk Nowitzki orchestrated like a Mozart masterpiece.

"I missed a lot of rebounds in our previous games and I thought if I could grab those rebounds again tonight, we'd win it," said Nowitzki after the 107-95 victory that pushed the Mavericks to the next round.

Nowitzki grabbed a game-high 12 rebounds this time as Dallas, the winner of 60 of the season's 82 regular games (a franchise best), maintained its record of not losing four straight this year.

More importantly, the Mavericks reasserted themselves as this year's chief NBA title contenders.

Well, they have the makings of a champion team, indeed. The Mavericks have the main ingredient needed by a team to win: three great players in Nowitzki, Nash and Nick Van Exel. The three alone combined for 88 points against Portland. The remaining 19 points were distributed among their teammates.

Nowitzki and Nash hit 50-plus percent from the field. Nowitzki had 31 points on 12-of-21 shooting and Nash 21 points on 9-of-16. Exel also excelled, pouring in 26 points. They are a trio as potent as the Fearsome Threesome of Shaquille O'Neal, Kobe Bryant and Robert Horry of the Lakers fame, and the Awesome Threesome of Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman of the old Chicago legend.

But what made the Mavericks' victory special was not so much the way their Terrible Trio really played or how they performed or why they had scored that many. Aside from owning a character that is as Texan as Janis Joplin—unbending like a cowboy to the core - the Mavericks seem to always know that the only way to win a war is to first survive it. Yesterday, they reinvented the meaning of it.

To win is to also survive the blows. It is not a question of emerging unscathed but pulling through despite all thebruises.

That is a much sweeter victory worth remembering, if not chronicling.

AT A GLANCE

NBA PLAYOFFS 2003

SECOND ROUND

Eastern Conference

(1) Detroit vs. (4) Philadelphia
Pistons 0, Sixors 0
Game 1 at Detroit (May 7, TBD)
Game 2 at Detroit (May 9, TBD)
Game 3 at Philadelphia (TBD)
Game 4 at Philadelphia (TBD)
*Game 5 at Detroit (TBD)
*Game 6 at Philadelphia (TBD)
*Game 7 at Detroit (TBD)

(2) New Jersey vs (6) Boston
Nets 0, Celtics 0
Game 1 at New Jersey (May 6, 7 am)
Game 2 at New Jersey (May 8, 7 am)
Game 3 at Boston (TBD)
Game 4 at Boston (TBD)
*Game 5 at New Jersey (TBD)
*Game 6 at Boston (TBD)
*Game 7 at New Jersey (TBD)

WESTERN CONFERENCE

(1) San Antonio vs (5) LA Lakers
Spurs 0, Lakers 0
Game 1 at San Antonio (May 6, 9:30 am)
Game 2 at San Antonio (May 8, 9:30 am)
Game 3 at Los Angeles (May 10,10:30 am)
Game 4 at Los Angeles (May 12,3:30 am)
*Game 5 at San Antonio (May 14, TBD)
*Game 6 at Los Angeles (May 16, TBD)
*Game 7 at San Antonio (May 18, TBD)

(2) Sacramento vs (3) Dallas
Kings 0, Mavs 0
Game 1at Dallas (May 7, 9 am)
Game 2 at Dallas (May 9, 9:30 am)
Game 3 at Sacramento (May 10, 9:30 am)
Game 4 at Sacramento (May 12, 10:30 am)
*Game 5 at Dallas (May 14, TBD)
*Game 6 at Sacramento (May 16, TBD)
*Game 7 at Dallas (May 18, TBD)

* If necessary
TBD (To Be Determined)

NBA BRIEFS

MJ to Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—Michael Jordan is interested in a possible role with the Charlotte expansion team and has talked recently with owner Robert Johnson about buying in as a partner, The Associated Press has learned. Johnson and Jordan have a publicly acknowledged friendship and have spoken frequently in recent years. But talks between the two men over the past three weeks have been different, including preliminary discussions over doing business together on the team Johnson bought last December for $300 million. "He and Bob have been talking," a source with knowledge of the discussions told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity. The as-yet-unnamed team will begin play in the 2004-05 season. The news of Jordan's possible involvement in Charlotte comes amid reports that his relationship with the Washington Wizards has deteriorated to the point where he and the franchise might part ways. *AP*

Hornets coach fired

NEW ORLEANS—Paul Silas was fired as coach of the New Orleans Hornets on Sunday after five seasons in which he set the franchise record for victories. The Hornets went 47-35 this season, finishing third in the Central Division. They were knocked out of the playoffs Friday night, eliminated in the first round in six games by the Philadelphia 76ers. Silas said he received a phone call Sunday from team co-owner Ray Wooldridge, who said the Hornets would not renew his contract. He leaves with an overall mark of 208-155 with the Hornets, who moved from Charlotte to New Orleans after last season. Silas took the Hornets to the playoffs each of the past four seasons, but they never advanced beyond the second round. *AP*

Mavs, Pistons eliminate foes

DALLAS—Dirk Nowitzki rebounded from his worst playoff game ever to score 31 points and haul down 11 rebounds as the Dallas Mavericks defeated the stubborn Portland Trail Blazers 107-95 in NBA playoff action Sunday.

The win gave Dallas the best-of-seven Western Conference opening series 4-3, as the Trail Blazers came up just short in their attempt to come back from a 3-0 series deficit.

In the day's other game, the Detroit Pistons completed an impressive series comeback to overcome the Orlando Magic 108-93, for a 4-3 series win.

No team in NBA history has won a series after losing the first three games, but Portland almost did, winning three straight games and then holding a 90-88 lead with less than five minutes remaining in Game Seven.

But the Mavericks pulled ahead on clutch shots from Nowitzki, Steve Nash and Nick Van Exel down the stretch to finally close the series out.

Dallas will meet Sacramento, the team that knocked them out of the playoffs last season, in the second round starting on Tuesday night in Dallas.

Van Exel added 26 points to the Dallas attack, while Nash had 21 points, seven assists and six rebounds.

Michael Finley chipped in 14 points and eight rebounds as Dallas outscored Portland 36-22 in the fourth quarter.

Nowitzki didn't have a rebound in 26 minutes in Game Six and atoned for his miserable effort in that game with a stellar performance in Game Seven.

"Our backs were against the wall, we didn't want to go on vacation yet," Nowitzki said. "I came out to try and get every rebound I could and it worked out."

Damon Stoudemire had 17 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Trail Blazers, who roared back from the 3-0 deficit to make it a thrilling seven-game series.

Rasheed Wallace also had 17 points for Portland, while Zach Randolph had 14 points and 10 rebounds.

Pistons 108, Magic 93

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Chauncey Billups scored 37 points as the Detroit Pistons completed their comeback win over the Orlando Magic in Game Seven of their Eastern Conference opening round series.

Detroit became just the seventh team in NBA history to rally from a 3-1 series deficit as the Pistons won the best-of-seven series 4-3.

Detroit will meet the Philadelphia 76ers in the second round of the playoffs.

The Pistons also avoided becoming just the third number one seed to lose in the first round of the playoffs since the NBA went to a 16-team playoff format in 1982.

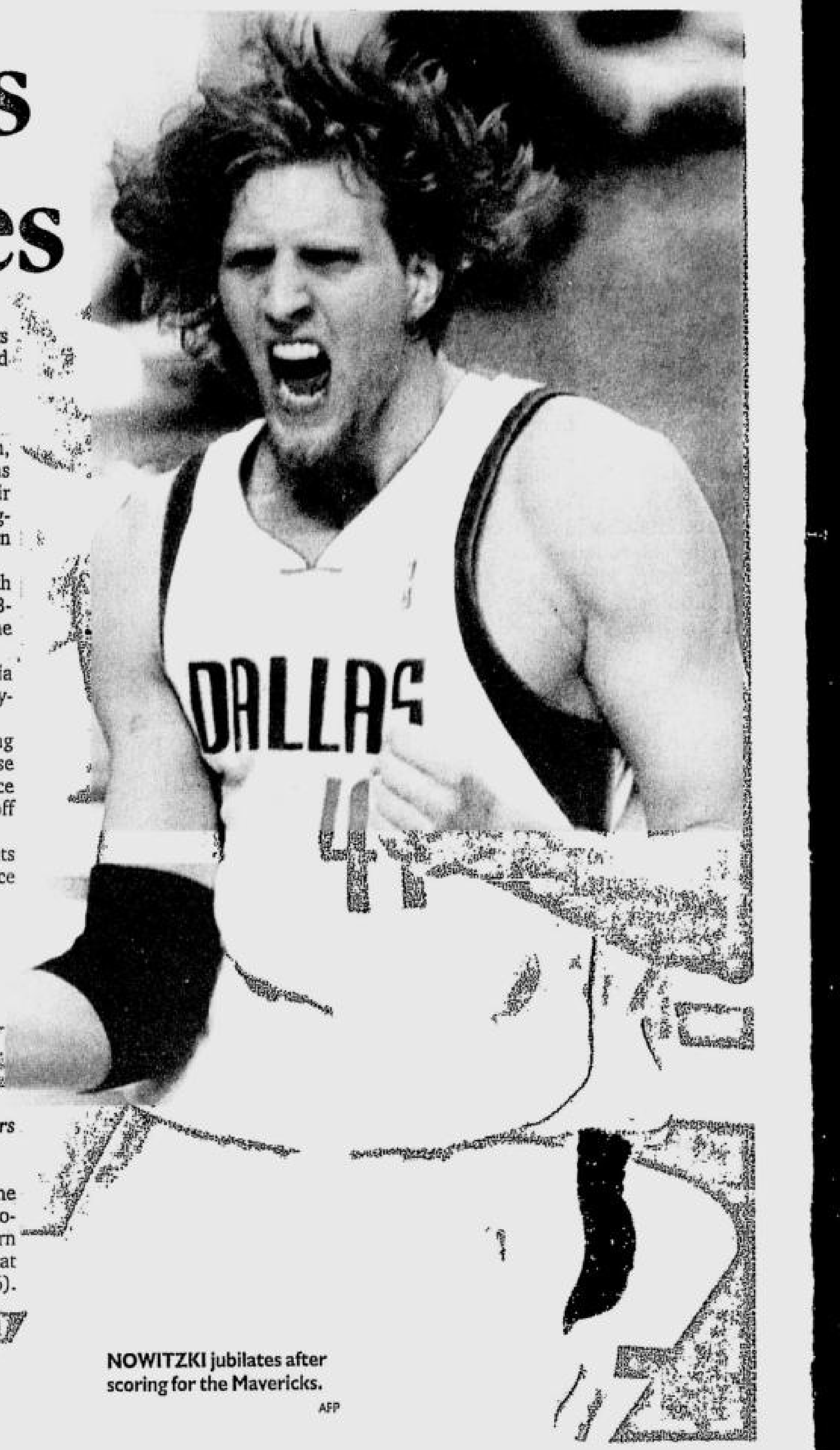
Richard Hamilton added 22 points for the Pistons, while Tayshaun Prince scored a career-high 20.

Ben Wallace added seven points, 12 rebounds, five assists and five blocks. *Reuters*

Semis live on Solar

SOLAR Sports will telecast Game One of the Los Angeles Lakers-San Antonio Spurs best-of-seven NBA Western Conference semifinals series live at 9:30 a.m. today (Tuesday, May 6). The replay will be at 8 p.m.

On Wednesday, Solar Sports will feature Game One of the other blockbuster West semifinals pitting the Sacramento Kings and the Dallas Mavericks live at 9 a.m. (replay 8 p.m.).



NOWITZKI jubilates after scoring for the Mavericks.
AFP

Capsule previews of NBA 2nd round playoffs

EASTERN CONFERENCE
No. 1 DETROIT (50-32, 4-3) vs No. 4 PHILADELPHIA (48-34, 4-2)

Season series: Tied, 2-2, with each team winning once on the other's home court. In one meeting, Ben Wallace had nine blocks as Detroit won by 28. In another, Allen Iverson fouled out for the first time in more than three years.

Storyline: The Pistons had to win the final three games of the first round against Orlando to advance, while the 76ers got past New Orleans in six games. Both teams rely heavily on defense.

Key matchup I: Chauncey Billups vs. Eric Snow. The Pistons' point guard capped a great series by scoring 37 points in Game 7 against Orlando, but he'll now go up against one of the top defensive point guards in the East. Both players are superb free throw shooters, with Billups the better all-around shooter and scorer.

Prediction: 76ers in 6.

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2 TILL THERE WAS YOU	2 X-MEN 2	2 X-MEN 2 12:05, 2:55, 5:45, 8:35	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 X-MEN 2 1:55, 4:50, 7:45, 10:40	2 X-MEN 2
3 X-MEN 2	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 X-MEN 2 1:20, 2:10, 5:00, 7:50, 10:40	Onstage ACOUSTIC NIGHT OUT FEAT. SIDE A May 10, 17, 30 & 31	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 ANGER MANAGEMENT 12:40, 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20, 11:30	3 X-MEN 2
4 X-MEN 2	ANGER MANAGEMENT		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 JOHNNY ENGLISH 1:00 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30	4 X-MEN 2
	5 JOHNNY ENGLISH		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 X-MEN 2 2:25, 5:40, 8:35, 11:30	5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
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3 (DOLBY)	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 (THX)	X-MEN-2

Magic Star Cinema

(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	X-MEN-2
2 (DTS)	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	BOLD STAR

Lianas Cinema

(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	RESERVE
2	BOLD STAR
3 (DTS)	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	WHAT A GIRL WANTS

Lianas MovieCity

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	X-MEN-2
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DTS)	JOHNNY ENGLISH
4	VIRGIN PEOPLE-3
5	XEREX

Olivarez Tri-Cinema

(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	XEREX
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	X-MEN-2

Olivarez Los Baños

tel (049) 249.2558

1	X-MEN-2
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	XEREX

Mega Center Mall

(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	RING-2
2	XEREX
3 (DTS)	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 (DOLBY)	X-MEN-2

Cabuyao

(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Emperor

(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	PUNLA
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall

(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	NATIONAL SECURITY
2	X-MEN-2
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	RING-2

Jade Cinema

(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	JOHNNY ENGLISH
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DTS ES)	X-MEN-2
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU

Cine Nepo Mall

(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	X-MEN-2
3 (DOLBY)	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4 (DTS)	JUNGLE BOOK-2

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72

PINOCCHIO

SHOWING ON MAY 7

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR

4173858

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
3	X-MEN 2
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU
5	X-MEN 2
6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
7	XEREX
8	EQUILIBRIUM

SM CENTERPOINT

7149522 -7161416

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	A MAN APART
3	X-MEN 2
4	XEREX
5	X-MEN 2
6	JOHNNY ENGLISH
7	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
8	EQUILIBRIUM
9	ANGER MANAGEMENT
10	TILL THERE WAS YOU

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

9350749

1	JOHNNY ENGLISH
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	EQUILIBRIUM
4	X-MEN 2
5	TILL THERE WAS YOU
6	XEREX
7	X-MEN 2
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU
9	A MAN APART
10	ANGER MANAGEMENT
11	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
12	X-MEN 2

SM CITY MANILA

5239240

1	X-MEN 2
2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
3	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
4	X-MEN 2
5	ANGER MANAGEMENT
6	X-MEN 2
7	EQUILIBRIUM
8	A MAN APART
9	TILL THERE WAS YOU
10	TILL THERE WAS YOU
11	TILL THERE WAS YOU
12	XEREX

SM MEGAMALL

6331901 • 6329401

1	EQUILIBRIUM
2	PHONEBOOTH
3	ANGER MANAGEMENT
4	X-MEN 2
5	JOHNNY ENGLISH
6	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
7	A MAN APART
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU
9	TILL THERE WAS YOU
10	X-MEN 2
11	PUNLA
12	XEREX

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

9295452

1	ANGER MANAGEMENT
2	X-MEN 2
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	XEREX
5	TILL THERE WAS YOU
6	JOHNNY ENGLISH
7	X-MEN 2
8	X-MEN 2

SM SOUTHMALL

8066888

1	X-MEN 2
2	ANGER MANAGEMENT
3	X-MEN 2
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU
5	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
6	A MAN APART
7	TILL THERE WAS YOU
8	X-MEN 2
9	JOHNNY ENGLISH
10	XEREX

SM CITY CEBU

2313876

1	X-MEN 2
2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
3	KANGAROO JACK
4	EQUILIBRIUM
5	XEREX
6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
7	TILL THERE WAS YOU
8	X-MEN 2

SM CITY ILOILO

3209422

1	JUST MARRIED
2	CLOSED
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	X-MEN 2
5	X-MEN 2
6	JOHNNY ENGLISH
7	CLOSED
8	XEREX

SM CITY PAMPANGA

7128015

1	X-MEN 2
2	X-MEN 2
3	JOHNNY ENGLISH
4	XEREX
5	TILL THERE WAS YOU
6	TILL THERE WAS YOU

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT

8284975

1	XEREX
2	X-MEN 2
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN

2514302

1	X-MEN 2
2	XEREX
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU

SM CITY DAVAO

2976998

1	X-MEN 2
2	XEREX
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	JOHNNY ENGLISH
5	TILL THERE WAS YOU
6	X-MEN 2

SM BICUTAN

776-3055

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	XEREX
4	X-MEN 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

859-2884

1	X-MEN 2
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	JOHNNY ENGLISH
4	X-MEN 2

THE PODIUM CINEMA

18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City
633-8976

1 THX	X2: X-MEN UNITED 11:10 FS/11:40 MF/2:30/5:20/8:10/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:20 END
2	X2: X-MEN UNITED 11:05 MF/1:50/4:40/7:30/9:50 LFS/ 10:20 LMF/12:40 END

LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

Matinee : P100.00 • Screening until 5pm • Monday thru Friday
Regular Rate : P120.00 • After 5pm • Saturday • Sunday • Holidays (Reserved Seating)

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS

@ Robinsons Malls

call-a-movie: 536- 7812

NOW SHOWING

Galleria

632- 9115- 16
633- 7641 loc. 279

THX	X-MEN2 11:20 LMF, 2:10, 5:00, 7:50, 10:30 LMF
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	X-MEN2
4	X-MEN2
5	A MAN APART
6	X-MEN2
7	XEREX
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU
9	JOHNY ENGLISH
10	WHAT A GIRL WANTS

MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema / P75 tiered cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita

536 -7809- 12

1	X-MEN 2
2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
3	XEREX
4	ANGER MANAGEMENT
5	X-MEN 2
6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
7	X-MEN 2

Metro East - Marcos hway

682- 8193 / 8280

1	ANGER MANAGEMENT
2	X-MEN 2
3	JOHNY ENGLISH
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU
5	X-MEN 2
6	XEREX
7	X-MEN 2
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU

Novaliches

935- 3229 - 30

1	X- MEN 2
2	A MAN APART
3	XEREX
4	JOHNY ENGLISH
5	X- MEN 2
6	ANGER MANAGEMENT
7	TILL THERE WAS YOU
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU

Malabon Citisquare

288-0985 / 288-2575

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	X- MEN 2
3	JOHNY ENGLISH
4	XEREX

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp.

(045)875-1927
(045)961-5270

1	X-MEN2
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	WILLARD
4	XEREX
5	JOHNY ENGLISH
6	X-MEN2

Imus

471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	XEREX
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	A MAN APART
5	X-MEN 2
6	JOHNY ENGLISH

Sta. Rosa Laguna

(049)837-0907

1	XEREX
2	X- MEN 2
3	TIL THERE WAS YOU
4	JOHNNY ENGLISH
5	EQUILIBRIUM

Bacolod

441- 0453 / 0459

1	X-MEN 2
2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	JUST MARRIED
5	X-MEN 2
6	X-MEN 2

Iloilo

336- 8077 - 78

1	X-MEN2
2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	XEREX
5	SHADOW OF VAMPIRE
6	X-MEN 2

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Vina Morales holds benefit concert at Dish

SHOW TIME

VINA Morales will hold a benefit concert for the National Children's Hospital tomorrow night, May 7, at Dish at the 3rd Level of Rockwell's Power Plant Mall.

Tickets are at P700 and P500. Media sponsor is Philippine Daily Inquirer. Other sponsors are Bench, Smart and PLDT.

On May 11, singer-guitarist Paolo Santos serenades moms in a special Mother's Day show on May 11.

Newest singing sensation Nina performs with the Essence Band on May 14.

On May 22, it's an acoustic night special with Paolo Santos, Noel Cabangon, Overtone and Blow with hunk Diether Ocampo in the monthly concert series, "Wired."

Sexy actress turned singer Patricia Javier will take center stage in a mini-concert for her VCD launch on May 28, with Pido With Take One.

Relive the glorious days of the '60s and '70s with the music of Rockin' Revival on Mondays (May 26) and Prime Council (May 12 and 19).

Regular crowd drawer Spirit of '67 performs on Tuesdays (May 6, 13, 20 and 31).

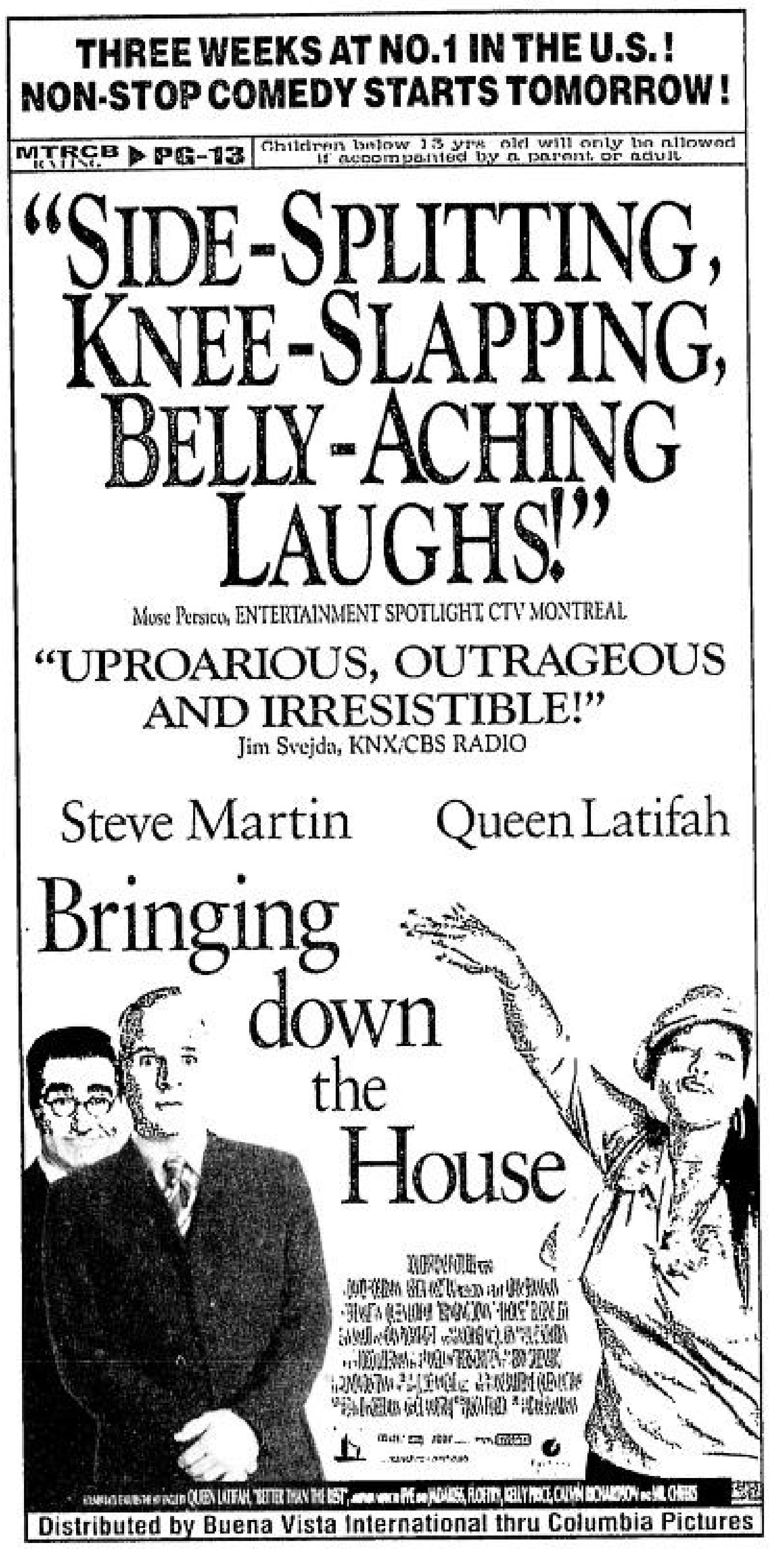
Catch 604's distinct sound with the Legatto band on Thursdays (May 15 and 29).

Feel the vibe of 17:28's brand of R&B and soul music, playing back-to-back with Pido With Take One on Fridays (May 9, 16, 23 and 30).

Experience a lively Saturday night with a boy-band night special night featuring 17:28 and Chronic (May 10) and Barbie's Cradle and 7 Foot Jr. (May 17); Barbie's Cradle and Rage (May 24) and Chronic with Rage (May 31).

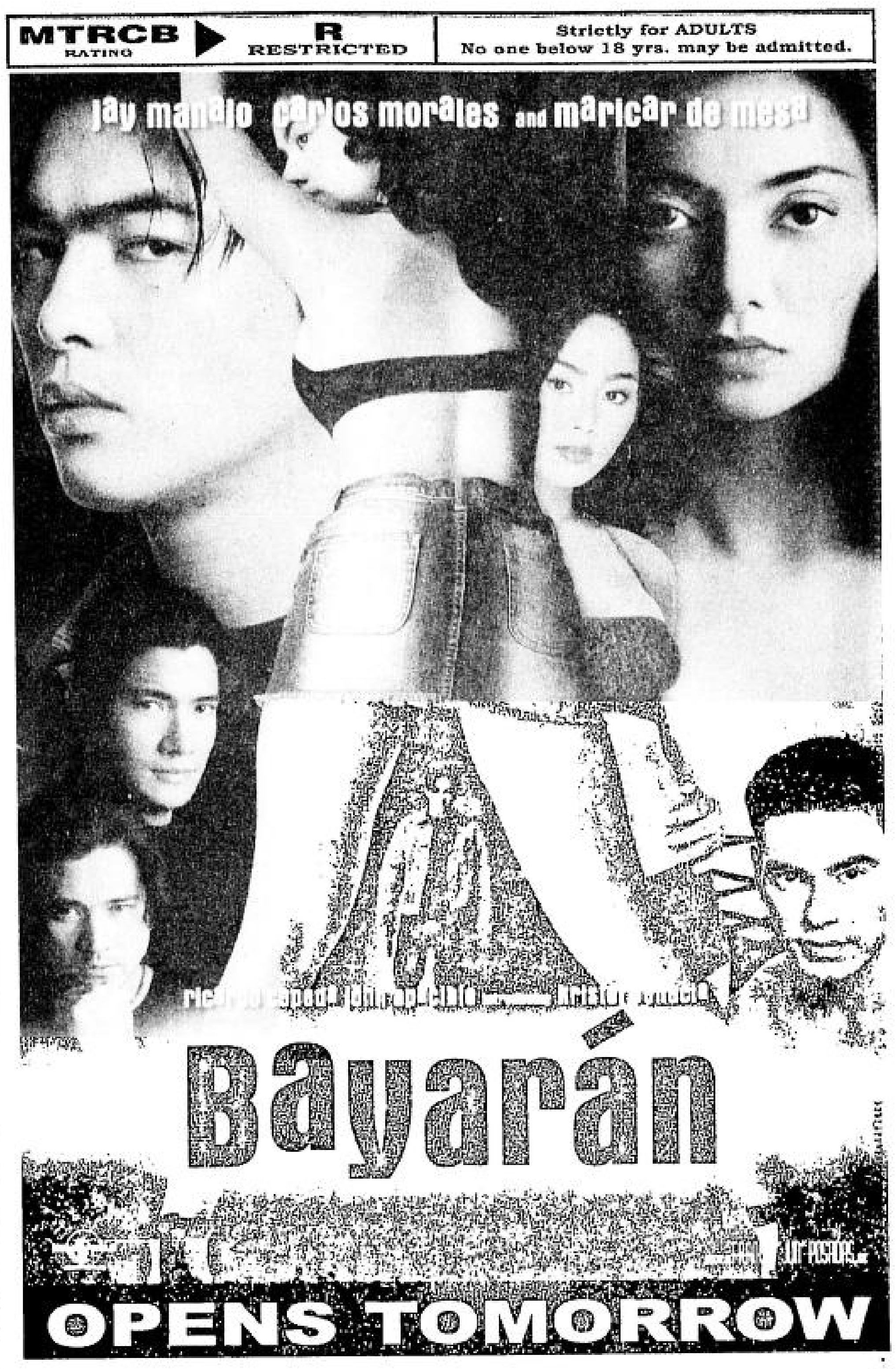
For reservations, call 898-1771 or 898-1824.

SEE IT FIRST!
SM CINEMA
Advance Screening
Invitational
DWTM Premiere
on May 6, 2003
7:30 pm
SM Megamall
Cinema 3
MTRCB RATING: R13
Regular showing on May 7, 2003
at the SM CINEMAS
A TRUE STORY OF ONE MAN'S RISE TO FAME AND NOTORIORITY
ASSASSIN BY NIGHT TV HOST BY DAY
LOVER BY HEART
GEORGE CLOONEY
DREW BARRYMORE
JULIA ROBERTS
and SAM ROCKWELL
with the Special Participation of
BRAD PITT
& MATT DAMON
CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
BASED ON A TRUE STORY


THREE WEEKS AT NO.1 IN THE U.S.!
NON-STOP COMEDY STARTS TOMORROW!
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
"SIDE-SPLITTING, KNEE-SLAPPING, BELLY-ACHING LAUGHS!"
Mose Persico, ENTERTAINMENT SPOTLIGHT, CTV MONTREAL
"UPROARIOUS, OUTRAGEOUS AND IRRESISTIBLE!"
Jim Svejda, KNX/CBS RADIO
Steve Martin
Queen Latifah
Bringing down the House
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	PUNLA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	PUNLA
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	PUNLA
B	BOLD STAR
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-2	BOLD STAR
CINEMA-3	A MAN APART
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-7	ANGER MANAGEMENT
CINEMA-8	PUNLA
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	JOHNNY ENGLISH
CINEMA-12	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-14	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-15	YEREY
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA


MTRCB RATING ▶ R RESTRICTED
Strictly for ADULTS
No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted.
jay manalo carlos morales and maricar de mesa
Bayarán
OPENS TOMORROW

OPENS TOMORROW
Catch the Advance Screening of
"CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND"
on May 6, Tuesday, 7:30PM, at the SM Megamall Cinema 3
MAGIC 89.9
For FREE invites simply log on to www.magic899.fm
A TRUE STORY OF ONE MAN'S RISE TO FAME AND NOTORIORITY
ASSASSIN BY NIGHT TV HOST BY DAY
LOVER BY HEART
GEORGE CLOONEY
DREW BARRYMORE
JULIA ROBERTS
and SAM ROCKWELL
with the Special Participation of
BRAD PITT
& MATT DAMON
CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
BASED ON A TRUE STORY
MIRAMAX

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG 13 | Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
"EXTRAORDINARY!"
Mike Cidoni, WGRZ-TV, NBC
"DAZZLING. MIND-BLOWING. THRILLING!"
Bill Diehl, ABC RADIO NETWORK
"AN ADRENALINE RUSH FROM START TO FINISH!"
Mose Persico, ENTERTAINMENT SPOTLIGHT
X2 X-MEN UNITED
MARVEL
NOW SHOWING!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: What is so different about the group fashion show that your group is putting up?

Guest: Different? Oh, a lot! We have different styles, and we're different designers with models coming from different countries!

(That's really different!)

***

Host: How can parents benefit from your symposium?

Guest: They can learn how to better relate to their children, particularly teenagers.

Host: Problem-solving?

Guest: Oh, yes, for example, what to do with your teenager kids *pag nagbababad sa loob ng telepono!*

(That's a tough problem to solve!)

***

Host: Do you consider yourself a good parent?

Guest: I hope so. And I think my children will agree. *Tama naman siguro ang paglaki sa kanila.*

(*Ano daw?*)

***

Host: Now that our program is celebrating its anniversary, what would you like to share with our audience?

Co-host: Of course, *sobrang* thank you, because if we are not here, they are not there!

(Uh, come again?)

***

Host: How objective do you think is the TV coverage of the war in Iraq?

Guest: I think, it depends.

Host: Depends on what?

Guest: I think it to the individual of the journalist!

(Ah, so!)

***

Host: What about you—how do you think the war is going?

Guest 2: It's not good for the coalition forces, they're now lacking in support back home. For example, *tinututulan na ngayon ang giyera ng maraming Britain!*

(Do tell!)

***

Host: Why is it taking such a long time for your new movie to finish shooting?

Guest: Because we have so many big stars, the main problem now is meeting all our schedules all together!

(Please repeat?)

***

Host: How did the hostage finally run away and get back to the protection of government forces?

Guest: When the rebels were sleeping, he saw his chance and tried to skip—he did not stop and continued skipping!

(Skip?—Oh, you mean escape!)

***

Host: Do you agree with what the senator said?

Guest: Oh, yes. Completely. That's why, I don't want to add anything more, I just want to iriterate what he said!

(Iriterate?—Oh, reiterate!)

***

Host: If Filipino entertainers are invited to entertain coalition forces in Iraq, would you volunteer?

Sexy starlet: Of course, I'll entertain!

Host: But, won't you get scared, going to a war zone?

Sexy starlet: Yes, *takot ako*, but I just won't entertain the thought!

(Yeah, just the troops, right?)

Feedback

FROM **Anna S. Toribio** of Makati City: "The service of our cable TV outfits can definitely be imposed. I would like to see more arts and entertainment channels made available to local cable viewers, also more children's and travel programs.

"What I need less of are channels from countries with obscure languages that I'm not interested in trying to understand. They're great for linguists who want to learn new languages fast, but I'm not one of them.

"They are put in simply because they're cheap to get, or are part of a package that includes more popular cable services. That's economical for cable operators, but it isn't good for viewers, because it just fills the TV screen with channels that very few people watch..."

Really lucky

MOST young men have to start their careers from the bottom, but **Luis (Lucky) Manzano** has his pick of the best offers of the TV-movie biz. Well, if your mom is **Vilma Santos** and your dad is **Edu Manzano**, you're entitled. —To the breaks, that is, not to success automatically handed to you on a silver platter. That, you have to work at, by proving that you've got more going for you than just your parent's gifted genes.

Luckily, Luis knows this, and is prepared to work hard to show that he deserves to become a star in his own right. The jury is still out on that one, but by the end of the year, we should know if Lucky Luis is in his folks beloved profession to stay.

6 award-winning Chinese films in Cebu film festival

FESTIVAL GUEST. Chinese Consul General Wu Liangli.

CEBUANOS had a chance to see some of the finest contemporary Chinese movies during the recent Chinese film festival at SM City Cebu's Theater One.

A joint project of the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China and the Arts Council Foundation of Cebu, the festival featured six acclaimed films.

Chinese Consul General Wu Liangli and Consul Wang Jilu led the members of the diplomatic corps who attended the festival's opening night, including British Consul Moya Jackson, Spanish Consul Jaime Picornell and Canadian Consul Robert Lee.

Prominent Cebuanos were also present: Arts Council trustees Alicia Tan Plaza and Marites Klepp; Cebu City Marriot Hotel general manager Christianne Wasfy; Teresin Mendezona, Ramon Chin, Elvira Luym, Felisa Chiongbian, and SM senior AVP Marissa Fernan.

"Not One Less" by Zhang Yimou was shown on opening night. The heartwarming story of a young teacher in a northern Chinese village won the Golden Lion Award in the 56th Venice Film Festival and the Best Picture in the 16th Iran International Children's Film Festival.

Also featured was another Zhang Yimou film, "The Road Home," a simple but touching love story that won the Silver Bear Award at the 50th Berlin International Film Festival and Best Picture in the 19th Teheran Fair International Film Festival.

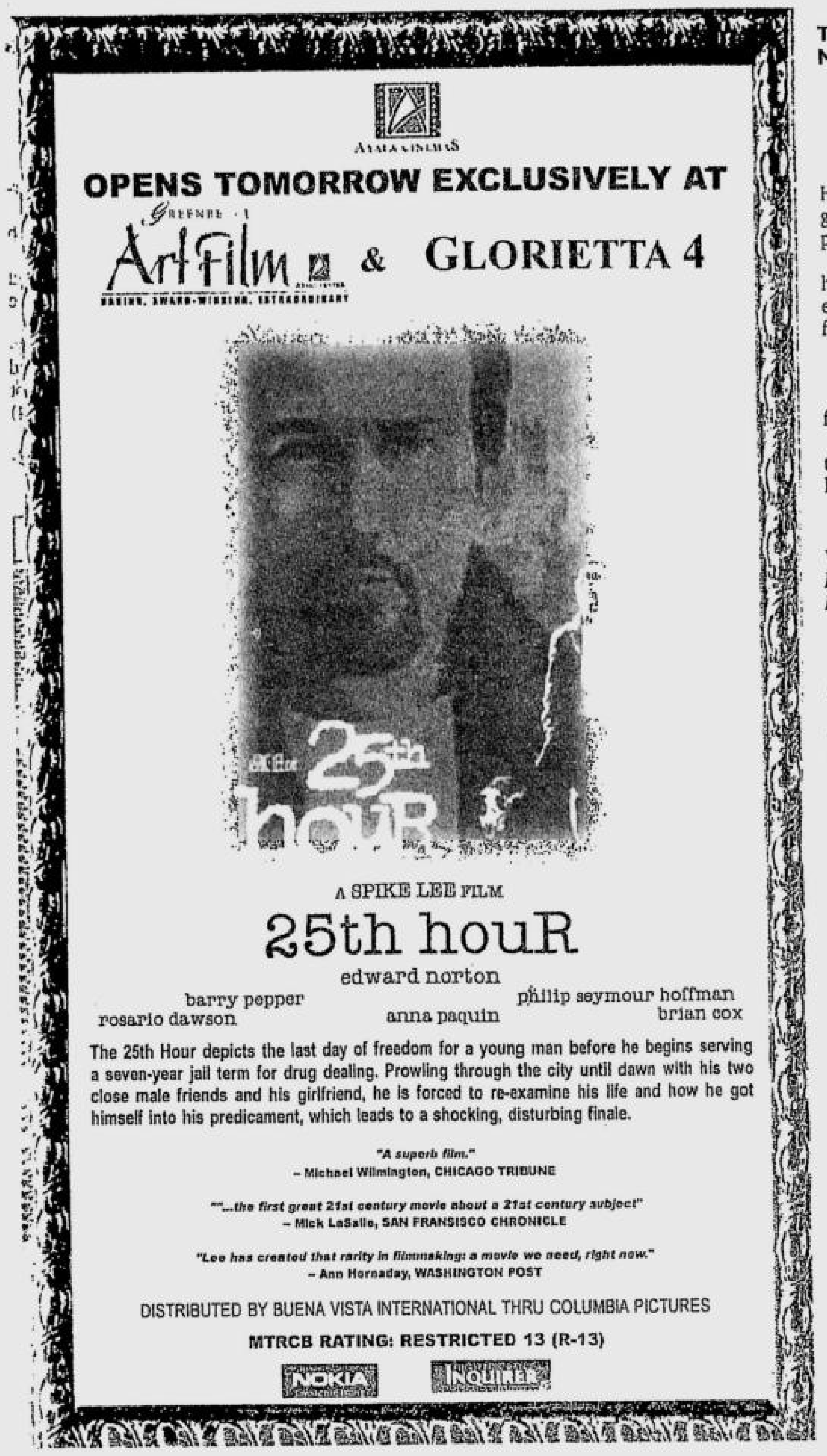
The other films were "Shower," a Toronto International Film Festival jury awardee; "The Postmen in the Mountains," winner of awards in the 23rd Montreal and the 31rd India international film festivals; "The Legend of the Yellow River"; and "Lotus Lantern," honored as the Best Animation Feature in the 1st Mardelplata International Children and Teenagers Film Festival.

Goma ...

From page A28

Estremo & DMC presents DJ **Ricky Stone** in Manila—The Last Stop. Catch UK's hottest DJ Ricky Stone's final performance in Manila on May 10 at Centro Bar Libis. Also featuring are DJ **Sam** of Followers of the Light, and a Summer and Skin collection fashion show. Tickets at P200, inclusive of one free drink, are available at the gate.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com



AYALA CINEMAS
OPENS TOMORROW EXCLUSIVELY AT
Greenbelt 1 ArtFilm & GLORIETTA 4
DARING, AWARD-WINNING, EXTRAORDINARY
A SPIKE LEE FILM
25th houR
edward norton
barry pepper
rosario dawson
anna paquin
philip seymour hoffman
brian cox

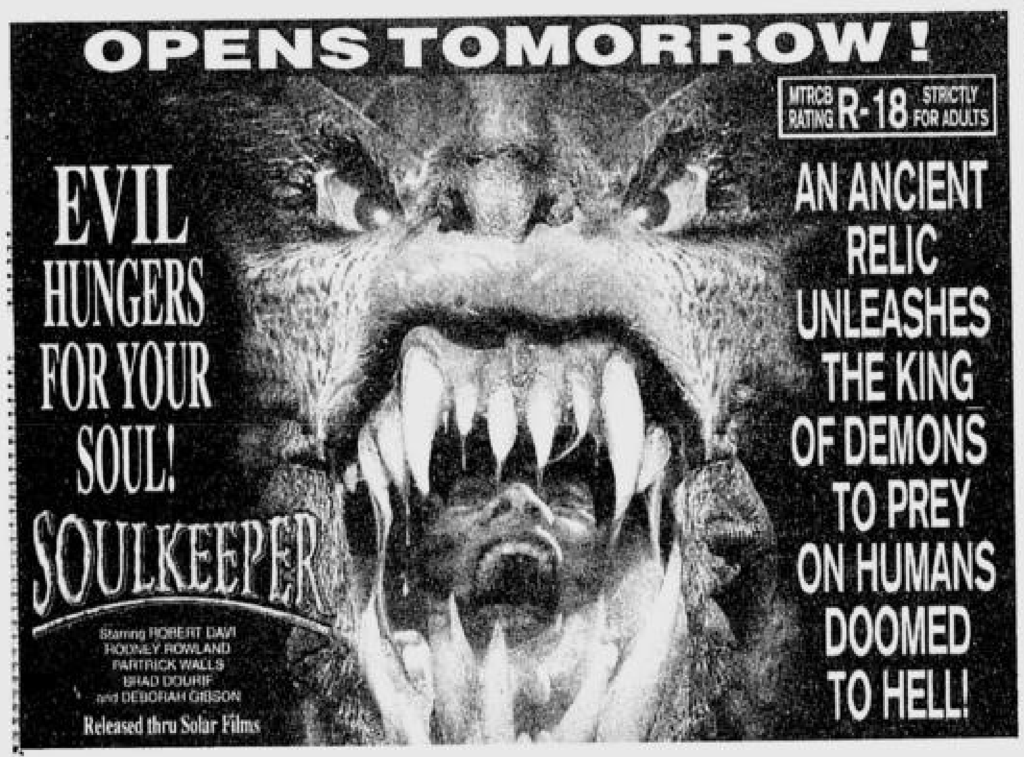
The 25th Hour depicts the last day of freedom for a young man before he begins serving a seven-year jail term for drug dealing. Prowling through the city until dawn with his two close male friends and his girlfriend, he is forced to re-examine his life and how he got himself into his predicament, which leads to a shocking, disturbing finale.

"A superb film."
– Michael Wilmington, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

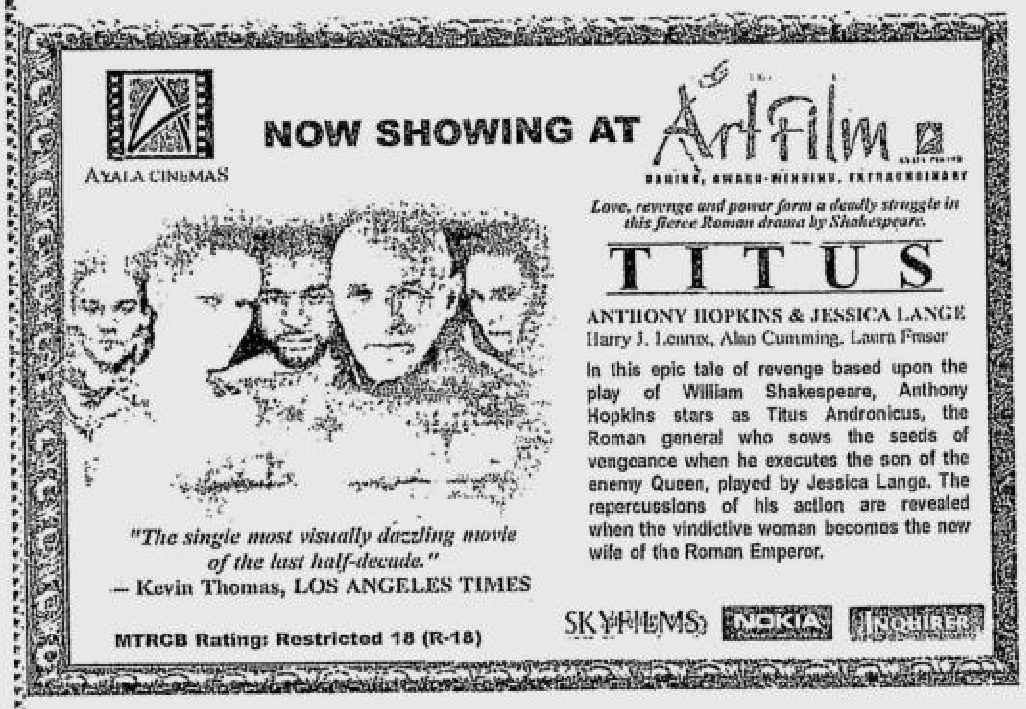
"...the first great 21st century movie about a 21st century subject"
– Mick LaSalle, SAN FRANSISCO CHRONICLE

"Lee has created that rarity in filmmaking: a movie we need, right now."
– Ann Hornaday, WASHINGTON POST

DISTRIBUTED BY BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL THRU COLUMBIA PICTURES
MTRCB RATING: RESTRICTED 13 (R-13)
NOKIA INQUIRER



OPENS TOMORROW!
MTRCB RATING R-18 STRICTLY FOR ADULTS
EVIL HUNGERS FOR YOUR SOUL!
SOULKEEPER
Starring ROBERT DAVI, RODNEY ROWLAND, PARTRICK WALLS, BRAD DOURIF and DEBORAH GIBSON
Released thru Solar Films
AN ANCIENT RELIC UNLEASHES THE KING OF DEMONS TO PREY ON HUMANS DOOMED TO HELL!



AYALA CINEMAS
NOW SHOWING AT ArtFilm
DARING, AWARD-WINNING, EXTRAORDINARY
Love, revenge and power form a deadly struggle in this fierce Roman drama by Shakespeare.
TITUS
ANTHONY HOPKINS & JESSICA LANGE
Harry J. Lennix, Alan Cumming, Laura Fraser

In this epic tale of revenge based upon the play of William Shakespeare, Anthony Hopkins stars as Titus Andronicus, the Roman general who sows the seeds of vengeance when he executes the son of the enemy Queen, played by Jessica Lange. The repercussions of his action are revealed when the vindictive woman becomes the new wife of the Roman Emperor.

"The single most visually dazzling movie of the last half-decade."
— Kevin Thomas, LOS ANGELES TIMES

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)
SKYFILMS NOKIA INQUIRER

Viva Concerts brings you
Acoustic night out
ONSTAGE
FREE
SIDFA
SERIES OF UNPLUGGED LOCAL MUSIC
Ticket Outlets:
Ticket Price: P1,300 • P1,100 • P800
SMART
MANILA BULLETIN
VIVA
RX 93.1

SEE IT FIRST!
SM CINEMA
Red Carpet Premiere
Invitational
Snack Studio Inc. Premiere
on May 6, 2003
7:30 pm
SM Megamall
Cinema 1
MTRCB RATING: R18
Regular showing on May 7, 2003 at the SM CINEMAS
Bayarán

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

JOHNNY ENGLISH P13 12:00,2:00,4:00, 6:00,8:00,10:00	X-MEN 2 P13 12:00,2:50, 5:40,8:30	X-MEN 2 P13 12:40,3:30, 6:20,9:10
X-MEN 2 P13 1:20,4:10, 7:00,9:50	ANGER MANAGEMENT R13 1:00,3:15,5:30, 7:45,10:00	X-MEN 2 P13 2:00,4:50, 7:40,10:30

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Editor Louie C. Camino

Pops, 'boyfriend' Brad together in Australia

By Leah Salterio

THE SECRET is out. Pops Fernandez and Brad Turvey, the 24-year-old Australian model who is rumored to be her boyfriend, are on holiday together in Sydney.

The 36-year-old Pops, after a series of guest appearances on GMA 7 shows following her transfer from the rival network ABS-CBN, went on vacation in Australia last week.

This was confirmed by her former husband, Martin Nievera, on GMA 7's "S-Files," last Sunday when he pitched his May 9-10 Araneta Coliseum concert with Regine Velasquez .

"S-Files" hosts Paolo Bediones and Janice de Belen earlier asked Martin where Pops was. Martin at first replied, "I'm not telling. It's none of my business."

Paolo, however, said "Pops is in Australia with...." He didn't finish the sentence.

The irrepressible Martin blurted out, "He's a nice guy. He's Australian."

He was apparently referring to Brad, the commercial model rumored to be the boyfriend of Martin's ex-wife. Brad has also taken a leave from his radio morning show on RX 93.1 to visit his family in Australia.

Pops and Brad, however, have never admitted their romance despite persistent gossip linking them to each other.

Pops, since she and Martin separated, has been linked to mostly younger men, including actors Aga Muhlach, Troy Montero, and Robin Padilla. Both Aga and Robin are 32. Troy is in his late 20s.

Pops was also reportedly the girlfriend of French businessman Jacques Dupasquier, who is in his 40s.

CONFIRMED. Pops Fernandez's ex-husband Martin Nievera revealed her Sidney sojourn.

Brad, born and raised in Australia, is part Australian, Scottish and Chinese. He doesn't have any Filipino blood.

Brad is well known as the guy who sang "Cry" with American pop singer/actress Mandy Moore in the Penshoppe TV commercial. Recently, he launched his show biz career by also joining GMA 7.

Even before he joined show biz, rumors had already involved him in the usual controversy. He was immediately linked to Pops after he and the singer/actress merely did a pictorial for her album, "The Way I Feel Inside." They also worked together in last year's summer special MTV for ABS-CBN's Sunday noontime show, "Asap." Two months ago, Pops left "Asap" and moved GMA 7.

Brad didn't know a word of Filipino when he first came to Manila to do modelling jobs two years ago.

In an interview earlier this year, Brad had told INQUIRER Entertainment that he didn't even know who Pops was before they worked together.

"Then I started hanging out with her and we became friends," he had said. "The rumors came as a shock to me."

Asked if he would fall for Pops, who is 12 years his senior, Brad had said, "Age is not an issue for me. Personality-wise, probably I would fall for her."

Brad is expected to return from Australia next week. It was not immediately known whether Pops would come home ahead of him.

For his radio show, "Morning Rush," with Chico and Delamar, Brad calls up the radio station on Tuesdays and Thursdays while he is on holiday.

After Pops returns from Australia, she will start her new solo show on GMA 7.

BRAD FIT. He would fall for Pops, Brad Turvey had admitted earlier.

DID YOU KNOW...

Martin Nievera hates using facial tissue to wipe his facial sweat. He always brings a face or hand towel for the purpose. This was apparent during his and **Regine Velasquez**'s rehearsals for their two-night concert at Araneta Coliseum.

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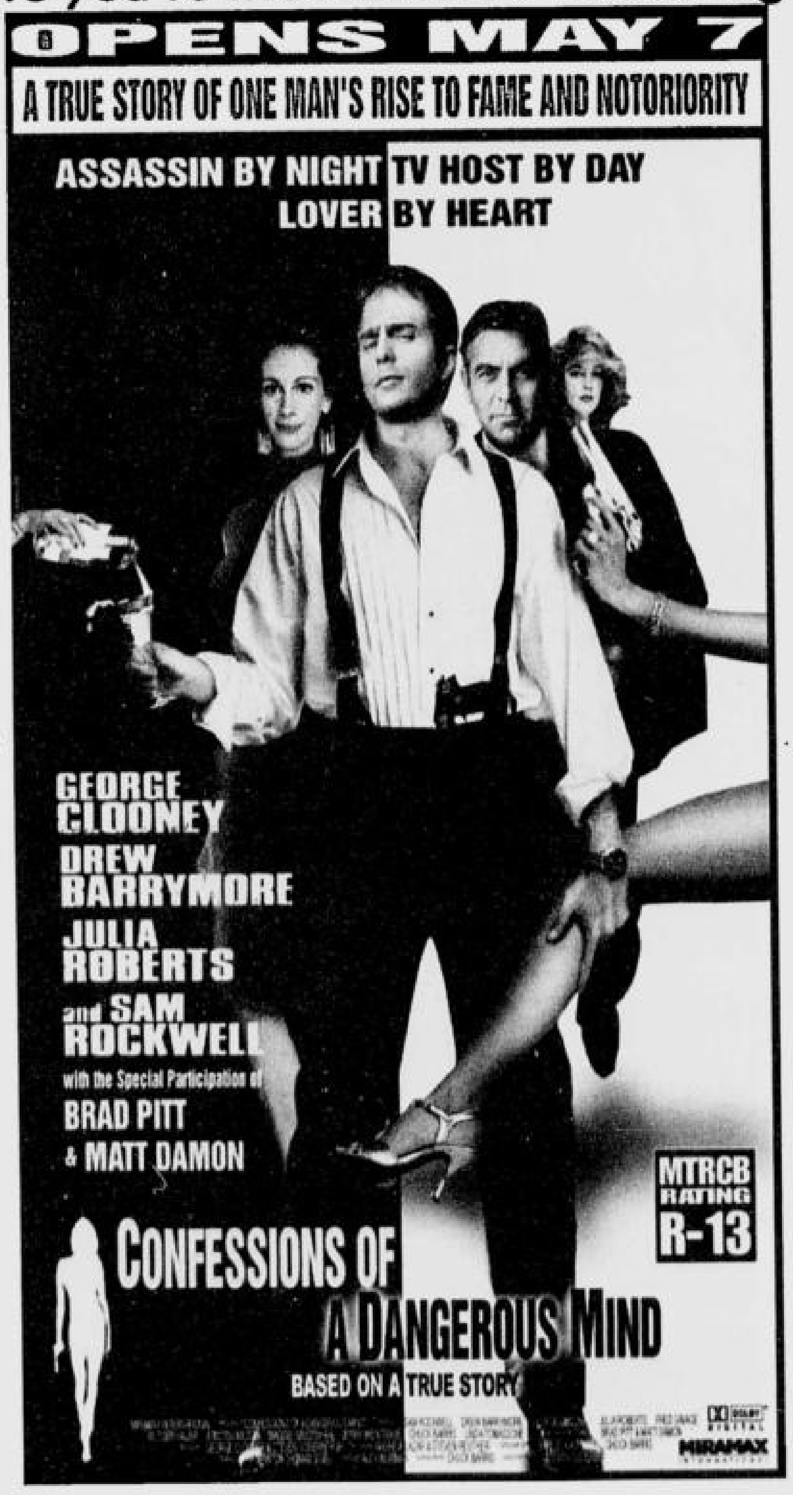

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Goma: I may be arrogant but I speak the truth

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I WELCOME reactions (of whatever sort) from stars I write about in this column. I may not always elicit the desired response but at least their reaction means that I somehow make a dent.

That is not to say that I am just out to catch their attention. I write what I feel and I feel what I write. At times my sentiments may be wrong but they are nonetheless real.

That's why when **Richard Gomez** texted me after I wrote about him in my previous column, I wasn't a bit startled. He was reacting to my "Just Asking?" item about his congratulating **Paolo Bediones** on the air on their show "S-Files" for the continued success of "Extra Extra." I wrote that his side comments about many shows folding up even as they tried to beat "Extra Extra" (obviously referring to the shows of his former home studio ABS-CBN 2) left quite a bad taste in the mouth.

In the spirit of fair play here's Goma's side:

"When I congratulated Paolo for 'Extra Extra's success, I didn't mean to say that GMA-7 shows are way ahead of ABS-CBN shows in the ratings. Some people may find me arrogant but that's because I stick to the truth. Does showing support for a colleague for a job well done mean I'm sour-graping?"

I get Goma's drift but he should have taken my column item in its entirety. I had even said that he might have just blurted that out to liven up the discussion. I put the item under "Just Asking" precisely because it was open-ended; it could be either one thing or the other.

But since Goma took it upon himself to react, my inquisitive mind leads me to more questions. Is his vehement reaction reeking of dire defensiveness, or maybe the reluctant politico in Goma just wants to be heard?

Mon's 'package'

MONSOUR del Rosario simply laughs off insinuations that he and his constant date, **Dina Bonnevie**, are a package deal these days.

During our animated Ilonggo chatter, the mild-mannered Mon said, "It just so happens that Dina and I have the same manager, **Arnold Vegafria**. That's why we hang out together most of the time but there's nothing between us. Arnold got me and Dina for a project so I guess that makes him a good manager. We have not started filming yet but if I'm not mistaken it's going to be a love story/ soap for GMA-7 with me as Dina's leading man."

What about the allegations that the role was meant for **Carlos Morales** but Mon ended up landing the part because of the "package deal"?

Mon guffawed: "That's so ridiculous! My manager is just doing his job and I do mine. Win some, lose some. In the past I lost some roles that I already thought were mine but that's show biz. Until the cameras start rolling you can never be sure. I don't lose over it, though. It's just a job."

Jessica pregnant again

AFTER suffering a miscarriage, **Jessica Rodriguez** is extra-careful with her present pregnancy. She has been confined in the hospital for several months now so that she can have complete bed rest.

The feisty talent manger and her hubby, **David Bunevacz**, don't want to lose their baby again.

I told Jessica, "Long before the SARS outbreak, you have been in quarantine already."

She laughed. "You know me, I'm always on the go. I can't stay put in one place. But all the sacrifices I'm making now are worth it. David has been so supportive. I feel like a princess. He sleeps in the hospital every night and takes care of me. My kids stay with us during weekends. We want to go through this as a family."

Jessica is on her seventh month and she can hardly contain her excitement. "We are going to have a baby girl," she said. "I was supposed to give birth in the US but since it's quite a delicate pregnancy, I'm not allowed to travel. I'm not even allowed to work. I'm having a hard time, but I've never been this happy and peaceful."

Vina at Dish

ON Wednesday, May 7, enjoy a night of singing and dancing in the concert of **Vina Morales** at Dish at the Power Plant in Rockwell, presented by Bench and Smart. Tickets are P700 with an appetizer, and P500. For ticket and reservation, call Dish at 898-1771 or 898-1824. The show is produced by PEG Inc. and is for the benefit of the National Children's Hospital.

***

GOMA/ A27

TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2003

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May inflation slows further to 2.8%

By Michelle V. Remo

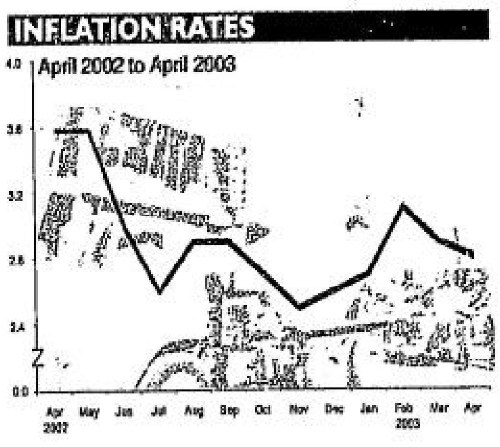
THE INCREASE in consumer prices slowed down further to 2.8 percent in April from 2.9 percent the previous month, showing a marked improvement in the stability of prices compared with the year-ago inflation rate of 3.6 percent, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

This brought the average inflation rate for the first four months of the year to 2.9 percent.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said prices were expected to remain stable in the coming months due to adequate food supply and the decrease in oil prices. "We expect inflation to remain below the 2003 forecast of 4.5 percent to 5.5 percent."

Neri added that oil prices marked a significant improvement in April, citing Dubai crude, which recorded an average price of $23.50 a barrel compared with $27.38 during the previous month.

INFLATION RATES



The slowdown in the inflation rate was primarily brought about by the slower increase in the prices of fuel, light, water and services, the NSO said.

The average increase in the prices of fuel, light and water stood at 6.5 percent in April, or a slowdown from the previous month's 6.7 percent. The inflation rate for services, meanwhile, dropped to 5 percent from 5.2 percent in March.

The increase in the prices of food also eased to 1.7 percent from the month-ago level of 1.8 percent.

Slower rates of increases were also recorded in other food products such as rice, 3.1 percent from the previous month's 3.2 percent; corn, 0.9 percent from 1.8 percent; fish, 0.7 percent from one percent; and miscellaneous foods, 2.1 percent from 2.5 percent.

Gay Cororaton, assistant director for national planning and policy staff of the National Economic and Development Authority, said in an interview that the further easing in the inflation rate could pull down interest rates in the coming months and reverse its current upward movement.

She said the slowdown also indicated that inflation would likely be lower than or hit the low-end of the full-year target of 4.5 to 5.5 percent.

SMC allots ₱28B for overseas expansion

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. said it would spend P28 billion for regional expansion starting this year and that it had firmed up plans for six out of the seven targeted countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

SMC president and chief operating officer Ramon Ang told reporters after the company's stockholders meeting yesterday that the company had finalized plans to put up food and beverage manufacturing complexes in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Taiwan and South China.

The ground breaking for these projects will be held in the next few months, while the plan for Australia has yet to be finalized, Ang said.

Ang said that in each of these countries, SMC would put up a new company involved in the beverage and/or food businesses in partnership with local investors.

While it wants the units to be wholly owned subsidiaries, the company plans to seek joint venture partners if it cannot raise enough funds on its own.

He said the cost of each venture per country was estimated at $100 million. SMC will spend about $30 million or 30 percent of the total cost of each venture while the rest of the financing requirement would come from the local partners and/or new borrowings.

"Each of the seven countries will give us around $300 million in minimum sales revenue yearly," Ang said, when asked about the impact of the offshore expansion on SMC's earnings.

At present, SMC earns only about 15 percent of the P156 billion in net revenues generated by its overseas operations—four breweries in Mainland China and one each in Australia, Vietnam and Indonesia. The aggressive regional expansion, he said, would increase the contribution of its overseas operations to as much as 60-70 percent of the total earn-

SMC/B2

INDICATORS

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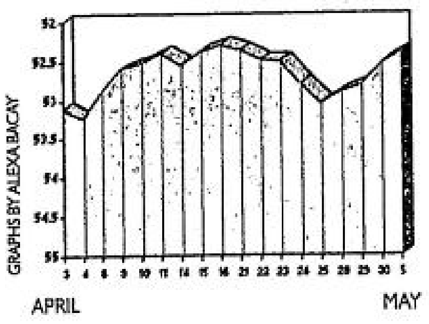

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STOCK MARKET

Stocks end up

STOCKS ended higher for a third straight session yesterday, with sentiment supported by offshore market gains last Friday and hopes for strong first-quarter earnings from some key companies, traders said.

"A lot of brokers are expecting very good outcomes for some companies," said Emmanuel Soller, a broker at EquitiWorld Securities.

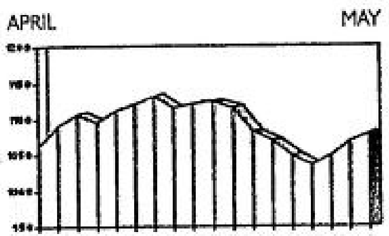
The main composite index closed up 12.22 points, or 1.14 percent, at 1,080.37 points. Turnover reached P294.91 million from P370.6 million last Wednesday.

The market was closed for holidays last Thursday and Friday.

"Many stocks right now are trading at single digit price/earnings ratios and some are even below par value and that is attracting some investors," said Soller.

Reuters

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

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100 years ago, the Russian had czars

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

I MUST apologize for my article appearing one day late but there was nobody around on Wednesday to type it. I type with one finger and when really under pressure, I can reach two words a minute providing they are very small. My left index finger has biceps, triceps and even forceps, while my right index finger is for the shift key, the space bar and picking my toenails.

I was in a restaurant with my companion when I happened to say that I had just come from Hong Kong. Immediately, there was a mad rush for the exit and quite a few people jumped through the plate glass window—very pane full. Meals were left untouched and unpaid for, and the owner nearly had a stroke. It was all so unnecessary because I was going to say that I had come from Hong Kong Bank to collect my pension.

I laughed so much that some food got stuck in my throat and I began to cough violently. I was immediately rushed to an isolation ward in San Lazaro Hospital despite the fact that my temperature was only 36°C. During the next week, I never saw anybody and every day I was given pizza or pancakes. I shouted to the nurse outside, "Is this food really good for me?" "No," she said, "but it is all we can shove under the door."

After a week, they let me go, but only after the FBI had checked that I was not Saddam Hussein or the British suicide bomber who escaped in Israel. I decided to spend the day at any favorite mall but was appalled to see a security guard with a doctor in a white coat brandishing .a 12-inch rectal thermometer. Don't they have the ones they can click in your ear?

There is another theory as to the origin of SARS, which is so far-fetched that I hesitate to mention it. Apparently, Tia Carrere may have caused it in one of her relic hunts. She was in Russia digging up the remains of one of the Czars. She knew it was the right sarcophagus because written on the wall was "Anna stays 'ere." She scooped up the remains from the coffin and put them in a bag before proceeding to Guandong. Unfortunately, it was not an ordinary paper bag. It was a carrier, which caused all the coffin.

Little is known about the virus except that it attaches itself to anything beginning with SAR. So, at risk, are people who are sarcastic, sardonic or sartorial. Also at risk are SARI-SARI stores, Indian ladies who wear saris and anyone who eats sardines. Avoid all these things. Better safe than sari. Like ointment, my jokes are always topical.

Every year for the past five years, I have published the 10 commandments as my major contribution to teaching people how to invest. I constantly revise, update and hopefully improve it. This year, I cut out all the jokes and replaced one of the minor commandments with "Learn support and resistance levels." The first three are guaranteed to make you a more successful player but you should follow all 10. I omitted the one about adultery.

In all previous years, regardless of the market, I have received scores of e-mails every day for about two weeks. This time around, I have so far received few e-mails, which shows how little interest there is in the stock market. I was planning to devote a serious article on support/resistance levels but I think it is pointless. People just want to be told what to buy, they have no interest in learning technical analysis. Only one person wrote in about the jokes so I will gradually phase them out, starting with the limericks.

While finishing my daily newsletter, SM Prime announced that the first quarter profits had grown by 10 percent to 12 percent. Bearing in mind the war in Iraq and the SARS scare, I thought that this was a highly creditable performance so I added a NEWSFLASH in large bold type telling everyone to BUY next day at P4.60. Next morning, Abacus Securities bought a large amount for clients together with another local broker, whom I believed deals for Henry Sy. Despite a large amount of local buying, the share price barely rose because foreign brokers were selling it down as if it had SARS. They sold a net P42 million worth of SMPH on a day when net turnover was only P152 million.

Credit Lyonnais reiterated SMPH as a BUY, with a 12-month price target of P7.40, while at the same time selling 300,000 shares at P4.65. Five US brokers follow the stock and all rated it as a BUY. It scored 100 percent on their rating scale, which is extremely rare for any stock. Yet UBS, which was one of the brokers, sold 1.8 million shares. Next day, the foreign selling ceased, except for the last few minutes and the stock rose 5 percent to P4.95.

I also bought GLOBE, at P530 as our research department was estimating P9.6 billion in profit this year and the company announced P3 billion for the 1st quarter, which is usually the weakest. With the company adding over 100,000 subscribers every quarter, it looks as if profits might be closer to P12 billion and AC would be happy to receive a higher dividend than the P14 recently announced. I originally recommended this stock at P410 and sold it at P600 when the chart gave a SELL signal. This is not a liquid stock so do not BUY it to trade, only as a long- term investment.

I was happy to see Alan Greenspan back at work after his prostrate operation and also his reappointment for another term. Wall Street has been incredibly strong despite the unemployment rate rising to 6 percent and manufacturing activity still contracting. The NASDAQ has been exceptionally firm on the theory that companies will first spend on technology, which makes them more efficient and cuts costs. Greenspan is cautiously optimistic and continues to disagree with the President's tax cuts. The weak dollar will help US exports and make European imports more expensive. But watch out, because the Yuan is pegged to the US dollar so China will also be a major beneficiary. The whole world is Peeking at Beijing's exports.

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Steel makers oppose planned 20% tariff protection for NSC

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry's plan to grant tariff protection to National Steel Corp. of up to 20 percent is facing strong opposition from local steel makers that have begrudged the government for continuing to prop up a bankrupt firm at the expense of finished steel product makers that have endured through the past years' crises.

In a letter to Trade Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II, Philippine Iron and Steel Institute president Welling Y. Tong warned that a tariff hike meant to attract new investors in NSC would have adverse and large-scale repercussions on the finished steel product makers.

These steel makers, Tong said, comprised the downstream industry which was the market of NSC's output of tinplates, steel billets and hot and cold rolled coils.

"As NSC remained close for nearly four years, the various segments of the local steel industry have continued to operate normally in the face of contracting demand and tight credit," Tong said.

He said the industry had successfully disproved fears that it would collapse with NSC's closure. While NSC's plant gathered dust in Iligan since its shutdown in November 1999, Tong said the rest of the local steel industry—consisting of 782 companies with 62,000 employees and P62.25 billion in investments—slashed their costs, upgraded their equipment, sharpened their marketing strategies, and haggled for the best prices for inputs.

Tong said high tariffs would automatically translate to higher cost of inputs for makers of finished steel products and lead to higher cost of housing and buildings, roads and bridges, canned goods, appliances and vehicle parts.

Cold-rolled coils and hot-rolled coils are currently slapped duties of 7 percent; billets are levied 3 percent, and tinplates come in duty-free. The prospective bidders of NSC have reportedly lobbied for a 20-percent tariff on steel products. Roxas announced that at least five investor groups—Minmetals Zhejiang International Trading Co. Ltd. and China International Iron and Steel Investments Corp. (China); Bhicknapahari group of France; Bel Trade Investment Holdings Ltd. of Hong Kong; and Tael Capital of London—have expressed interest on acquiring NSC.

Roxas will meet today with NSC's creditors to put the finishing touches on NSC's debt rehabilitation program that would pave the way for the reopening of its plant under a new investor.

Instead of making NSC artificially viable, Tong, who is president of Pag-Asa Steel Works Inc. which has also expressed interest in taking over NSC, said the government should make sure that the new investor group should be financially and technically capable.

CAP in talks with prospective investors

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has called on shareholders of College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. to immediately infuse P2 billion into the company or get an investor to put up the funds in order to strengthen the CAP's capital base.

In an interview yesterday, SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said that the commission in the meantime was considering appointing a comptroller and management committee to assist CAP in "enhancing its assets and managing its operations."

Bautista said the SEC had revalued MRT bonds that formed part of the company's trust fund to a level that was P2 billion lower than proposed by CAP. Thus, she said the pre-need firm had to cover the amount.

She said CAP had started negotiations with three foreign investors. The company, however, asked for three months to finalize talks with prospective investors and to raise the money.

The investors, mostly foreign insurance firms, have reportedly told the SEC that they needed a few months to conduct a due diligence on CAP.

Bautista said that CAP could also cover for the P2 billion by securing a surety bond.

CAP, earlier this year, submitted its actuarial valuation report based on a modified method of computation. It also filed a proposal for the upward reappraisal of the assets that formed part of its trust fund, particularly the MRT bonds.

Lopezes' overseas unit to issue $35M in term notes

By Doris C. Dumlao

FGHC International Ltd. (FIL), an offshore unit of the Lopezes' First Philippine Holdings Corp., is raising $35 million through the issuance of term notes convertible into a 3.5-percent stake in flagship subsidiary First Generation Holdings Corp.

The seven-year notes will be issued to Cayman Islands-based mezzanine-type fund manager Asian Infrastructure Mezzanine Capital Fund Inc. (AIMCF), FPHC spokesperson Rodolfo Waga Jr. told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

Proceeds from the term notes issue will be used to refinance FIL's maturing obligations to FPHC. It will be tied to a call option relating to shares in First Gen.

"The agreement governing the issue likewise allows for another possible set of investors to purchase additional guaranteed notes in the total amount of up to $35 million with call and put options for up to another 3.5 percent stake in First Gen," Waga said.

The deal with AIMCF will be at a premium over the valuation made related to Sumitomo Corp.'s investment in First Gen in December 2001, Waga noted.

Sumitomo of Japan had infused $20 million into First Gen in exchange for a 3.81-percent stake in the country's largest listed power generating company. The deal then valued First Gen at $525 million.

"AIMCF likewise has a one-time right to exercise all or part of the call options to FPHC subject to certain conditions," Waga said.

This means that on the fifth year, AIMCF has the option to exchange the loan into a 3.5-percent stake in First Gen or simply ask to be paid on maturity.

The notes to be purchased by AIMCF will be guaranteed by FPHC under a parent support agreement. In turn, FPHC will grant the call options.

Prior to Sumitomo's buy-in, AIDEC FG Power Corp. Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Asian Infrastructure Development Co. Ltd., invested $40 million in First Gen in exchange for a 7.75-percent stake.

FPHC, for its part, said it was willing to sell up to 28 percent more in additional stake in the power firm. However, it is inclined to keep a 60-percent (out of 88 percent) control of the company.

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6.	CELEBRITY SPORTS PLAZA	180,000	170,000
7.	CLUB FILIPINO	160,000	130,000
8.	COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY	400,000	320,000
9.	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	260,000	220,000
10.	MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	10,200,00	
11.	MANILA POLO CLUB	2,400,000	2,200,000
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18.	TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS GOLF	720,000	700,000
19.	VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	160,000	135,000
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21.	WACK WACK GOLF CLUB	8,500,000	

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LETTY M. DELOS SANTOS, MARKETING CONSULTANT
PAUL CORTEZ, PRESIDENT
TEL. NOS. 8176655 / 8121066 / 8193560 / 7817982 CP#0917-8114692

INTEREST RATES

May 05, 2003-MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 5-May-03 (%)	MART1 30-Apr-03 (%)
1 Month	8.1092	7.9271
3 Months	8.1712	8.1069
6 Months	8.7827	8.7942
1 Year	9.5481	9.6673
2 Years	9.7404	10.1652
3 Years	10.5115	10.7981
4 Years	11.2673	11.4577
5 Years	11.6785	11.7773
7 Years	12.3712	12.5542
10 Years	12.9327	12.9865
20 Years	13.4019	13.4423
25 Years	13.95	14.0211

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 5, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16	16	15.75	15.75	51,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	37	38.5	37	38.5	975,600
China Banking Corp.	660	665	660	665	1,450
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	24.5	25	24.5	24.75	137,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	29	29	28	28.5	166,000
Philippine National Bank	24.5	25	24.5	24.75	64,600
Security Bank Corp.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	35,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.25	17.25	17	17.25	11,500
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	93,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1340	1340	1340	1340	1,050
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1020	1025	1020	1020	2,610
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
Diversified Fin. Network	3.8	4.05	3.8	4.05	33,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.76	0.77	0.75	0.76	4,900,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	560	560	560	560	98,920
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	1,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.017	0.019	0.017	0.018	8,600,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.32	2,770,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	385	395	385	392.5	84,800
Ivantage Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.4	630,000
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	20,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.8	204,000
Manila Electric Co. B	10.25	10.5	10	10.25	587,200
Petron Corp.	2.02	2.1	2.02	2.1	4,751,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	550,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	1,075,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.46	2.46	2.44	2.44	88,000
William,Gothong & Aboitiz	2	2	2	2	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.56	0.59	0.56	0.57	4,380,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.7	0.7	220,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31	31	31	12,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.25	16.5	16	16.5	1,298,700
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.73	0.7	0.73	240,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	57	49,500
San Miguel Corp. B	66.5	66.5	66.5	66.5	193,800
Universal Robina Corp.	4	4	4	4	341,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	30,000
Ayala Corp.	3.95	4.05	3.95	4	1,699,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	3,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	1,300,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.28	2.28	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.225	0.23	0.215	0.225	13,670,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	20,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	300,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.245	0.25	0.24	0.24	2,250,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	25,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.1	8.3	8.1	8.2	275,000
Ionics Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	250,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.5	1.5	85,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.58	460,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.18	480,000
Music Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.3	1,040,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	100,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	1.1	1.16	1.1	1.16	17,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.9	2	1.9	1.98	761,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	20	20	20	20	3,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	17	17	16.75	17	308,700
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	200,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	250,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	20,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5	5	4.95	4.95	1,610,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.15	0.155	0.15	0.15	300,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.2	0.205	0.2	0.205	650,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.17	960,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.87	0.88	0.87	0.87	6,690,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	1,700,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.15	0.155	0.15	0.155	80,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	5,000
SM Development Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	7,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	4.9	4.95	4.8	4.9	10,009,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	1,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0044	0.0055	0.0044	0.0048	199,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	80,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	80,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	500,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	39,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	20,000,000
Pacifica	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	7,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	100,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	10,000

CURRENCIES

May 5, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.890472	1.000000	52.612000
Japan	Yen	0.007487	0.008408	0.442400
United Kingdom	Pound	1.428851	1.604600	84.421200
Hongkong	Dollar	0.114181	0.128225	6.746200
Switzerland	Franc	0.662406	0.743882	39.137100
Canada	Dollar	0.627711	0.704920	37.087300
Singapore	Dollar	0.502495	0.564302	29.689100
Australia	Dollar	0.560292	0.629208	33.103900
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.362120	2.652661	139.561800
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.237466	0.266674	14.030300
Brunei	Dollar	0.501082	0.562715	29.605600
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000103	0.000116	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.020830	0.023392	1.230700
UAE	Dirham	0.242451	0.272272	14.324800
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.123000	59.083300
Argentina	Peso	0.319166	0.358423	18.857400
Brazil	REAL	0.307060	0.344828	18.142100
Denmark	Kroner	0.134757	0.151332	7.961900
India	Rupee	0.018846	0.021164	1.113500
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.234366	0.263193	13.847100
Mexico	New Peso	0.087199	0.097924	5.152000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.500349	0.561892	29.562300
Norway	Kroner	0.127081	0.142712	7.508400
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015433	0.017331	0.911800
South Africa	Rand	0.118690	0.133289	7.012600
Korea	Won	0.000735	0.000825	0.043400
Sweden	Kroner	0.110039	0.123574	6.501500
Syria	Pound	0.021202	0.023810	1.252700
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025662	0.028818	1.516200
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000558	0.000627	0.033000

SMC allots ₱28B . . .

From page B1

ings of the group.

The P28 billion that SMC is planning to spend for offshore expansion represents the $540 million in fresh funds raised from the sale of a 15-percent stake to Japan's Kirin Brewery Ltd. last year.

During yesterday's stockholders meeting, SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. stressed that despite the difficult environment, the regional market presented a lot of opportunity for the company as the domestic economy gave it very little room for growth.

In the beer market, for instance, he noted that SMC already controlled 95 percent of the market. The conglomerate is likewise the single most dominant group in the food and soft drink business.

"Per capita incomes in these countries are growing steadily. As the economies of Vietnam, South China, Indonesia and Thailand further improve and as growth shifts to urban centers, we anticipate a growing preference for lifestyle and conveniently packaged products," Cojuangco said.

Cojuangco said he saw no reason why SMC would not make profit in these countries, especially since the selling price of beverage products there was much higher.

During the stockholders' meeting, SMC announced that its net income increased by 21 percent in the first quarter to P1.34 billion from a year ago.

SMC's operating income in the first quarter hit P2.59 billion or slightly above the previous year as consolidated net sales revenue rose by 12 percent to P33.8 billion on the back of strong volumes from beverage, packaging and food.

Cojuangco told shareholders that San Miguel "should do better this year than last year," when it posted a calendar 2002 net profit of P6.63 billion.

However, he said the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in China and Hong Kong was "a major concern" for San Miguel's brewing operations in these areas.

US REMAINS TOP MARKET

Exports grew 8.6% in March

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S merchandise exports recorded an 8.6-percent growth in March, reaching $3.1 billion compared with $2.85 billion during the same period last year, the National Statistics Office said yesterday.

The export growth figure was a significant leap from the previous month's 3.6 percent and from January's 2.3 percent.

The increase in the country's exports indicated that the global economy was still moving at a healthy pace despite the recent announcement that the United States suffered from an increase in unemployment rate, said Gay Cororaton, assistant director for national planning and policy staff of the National Economic and Development Authority.

She said the country's export performance was consistent with the government's projection that the US-Iraq war would only last within the first quarter of the year and would pose minimal lingering effects only up to the second quarter.

The government's export growth target for the year is set at 5 percent.

The growth was attributed to the increase in the export of manufactured goods, agro-based products, and mineral and petroleum products, data from the NSO showed.

Accounting for 87.9 percent of total export receipts, sales of manufactured goods increased 5.9 percent to $2.72 billion from $2.57 billion during the same period last year.

Income from all agro-based products, meanwhile, increased 25.8 percent to $158.33 million from $125.82 million last year.

Receipts from exports of mineral products increased 41.6 percent to $58.91 million from $41.59 million, while petroleum products contributed $37.77 million.

Earnings from electronic products, which accounted for 64.7 percent of aggregate export revenue for the month, grew 0.1 percent to $2.003 billion from $2.002 billion the previous year, with semiconductors—which compose majority of electronics exports—growing 4.8 percent to $1.45 billion from $1.39 billion.

Articles of apparel and clothing accessories, meanwhile, posted a 21.5-percent increase in export earnings to $191.17 million from last year's $157.31 million.

The United States remained the country's top export destination, accounting for 21 percent of the country's aggregate receipts valued at $650.97 million. The figure was an 8.9-percent decline from last year's $714.22 million.

Japan was second, cornering $479.21 million in export receipts, while Hong Kong accounted for $272.58 million of the total.

The Netherlands was the country's fourth biggest export market, cornering $250.8 million. Singapore followed the Netherlands with $191.75 million.

Completing the top 10 largest markets were: Taiwan, $187.23 million; Malaysia, $184.63 million; China, $143.77 million; Germany, $131.24 million; and Republic of Korea, $116.4 million.

High April tax take seen bringing budget gap on track

By Clarissa S. Batino

STRONG revenue collection in April likely kept a tight rein on the budget deficit last month to a level well within the target of P12 billion, government officials said yesterday.

"The numbers are looking good. Clearly, the BIR and Customs exceeded their targets and their strong performance augurs well in keeping the budget deficit contained in April," Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said in an interview.

Responsible for collecting almost 80 percent of the government's annual receipts, the Bureau of Internal Revenue said that as of yesterday morning, collections in April stood at P49.5 billion against a target of P47.42 billion.

Revenue Comissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said the bureau's best-case estimate for April was P50.7 billion, the highest since April 2001 when collections reached P53 billion.

CAMACHO

Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo reported last week that collections in April reached P8.92 billion, higher by P825 million or 10.2 percent than the P8.099 billion goal for the month.

Camacho said he was pleased with the performance of the two biggest-earning agencies of the government.

The positive numbers came ahead of the review by Fitch Ratings starting today and the bi-annual visit of the International Monetary Fund starting May 8.

The government is bent on cutting the deficit, which swelled in the first quarter to P58.9 billion against a target of P55.2 billion due largely to higher-than-programmed spending.

A government source said that if expenditures were kept within targets as Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin had assured, the anticipated minimal deficit in April would bring the fiscal numbers on track.

Camacho said the latest developments should strengthen the government's case in convincing Fitch Ratings to keep the country's sovereign markets steady at "BB plus."

The risk of a downgrade from Fitch grew after Standard & Poor's downgraded its credit rating on Philippine debts to "BB" a day after the government announced the first-quarter fiscal numbers.

Unlike S&P, which relied merely on the numbers in backing its decision to downgrade the Philippines' sovereign rating a notch lower, Fitch would be on ground to witness ongoing efforts of the government, particularly the BIR, to improve the country's tax take, said the finance chief.

"We hope Fitch would be more patient and see first whether we could sustain the improvements we have shown so far. Since they are coming in personally, we have a better chance of telling our story," the finance chief said.

Gov't sees minimal impact of SARS on export growth this year

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SARS epidemic is expected to clobber Philippine exports by the second quarter this year but the Department of Trade and Industry is confident that export growth would remain at 5 percent for the whole year.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said the SARS problem would "reverse our growth in the second quarter" after exports in the first quarter climbed 5 percent to $8.51 billion from $5.12 billion a year ago.

"We are cautious but our 5-percent growth forecast for the whole year might still hold," Roxas said.

Roxas said export growth would come from non-traditional countries like China and Hong Kong, which posted a combined growth rate of 44 percent in the first quarter. In contrast, exports to the United States, the country's biggest market, fell by 11 percent during the period.

Roxas said that based on US surveys, American businessmen do not foresee a new recession to take place but they expect the US economy to remain weak over the next six months.

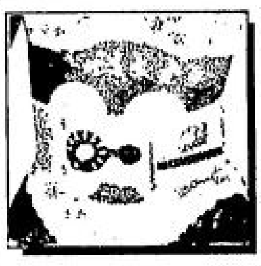
With the US in a slump, Roxas said the Philippines would have to look at other markets to boost exports. "Market diversification and precision marketing are the key factors at this point," Roxas said.

The DTI has stepped up its efforts to encourage exports to China (where the country held its first product exhibition recently), Hong Kong, and other Asian countries such as Malaysia (which increased its Philippine imports by 44 percent in the first quarter this year). Roxas, however, left out in his forecast the impact of SARS on China and Hong Kong where the killer pneumonia has already dampened consumer demand by forcing buyers to stay at home.

Japan, the country's number 2 export market, surprisingly posted a 4.6-percent growth and Europe chalked up a 14.6-percent increase in exports in the first quarter this year, prompting the DTI to focus on country-specific promotion projects. Roxas said he expected these markets to improve further for the rest of the year and help offset the negative impact of SARS and a depressed US market.

Roxas has also endorsed the promotion of second-line export products—gifts and houseware, furniture, construction materials, food and marine products—which he said were immune to global trends and would therefore present a more stable source of export growth for the country. He said category-1 products such as electronics and semiconductors, garments, and automotive parts have been the hardest hit by the slump in the United States.

GET SLIMMER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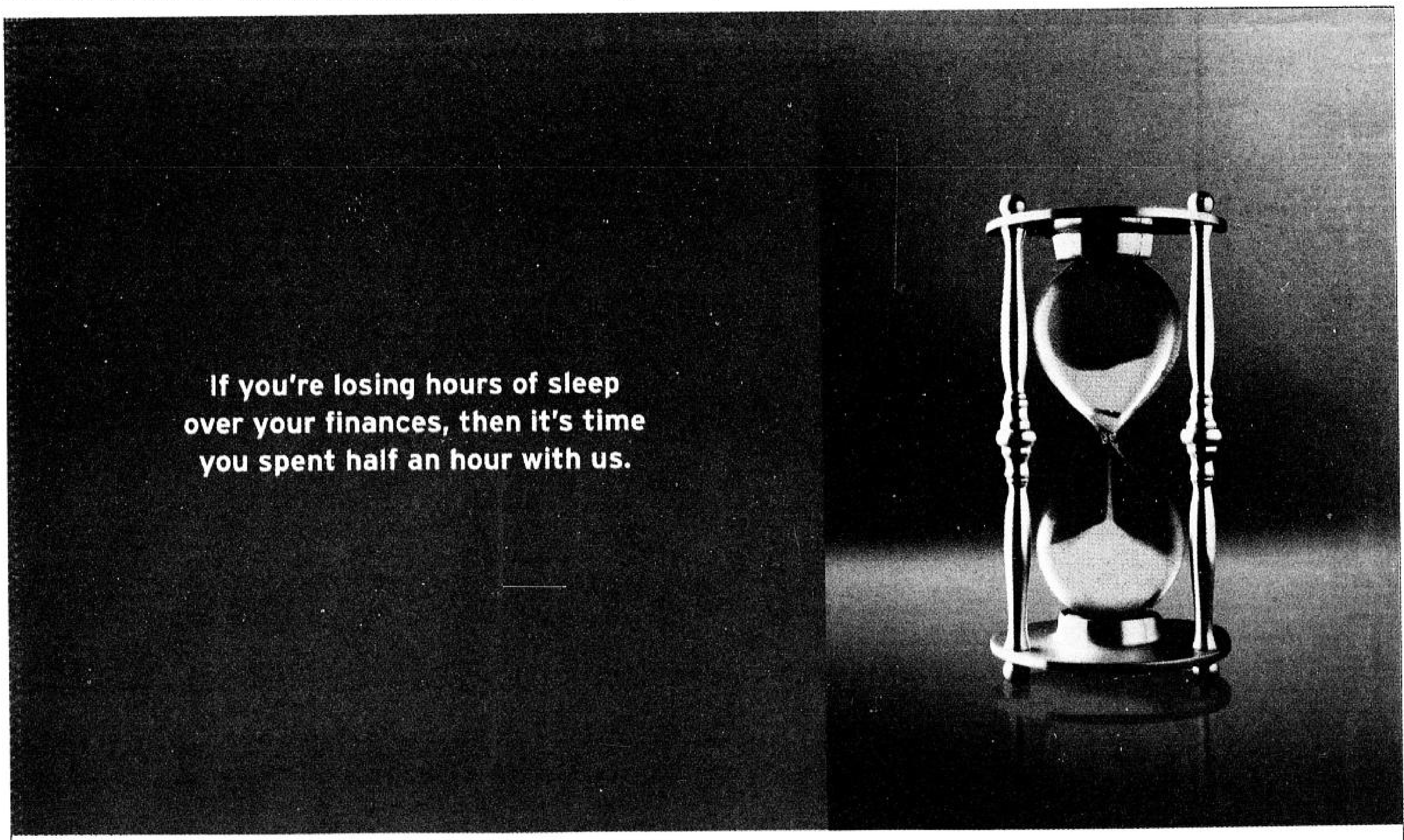
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Hopes SARS may be waning boost Asian markets

A CHINESE worker restocks shelves with cleaners and disinfectants at a Beijing supermaket. Disinfectants, cleaners and masks have been more and more difficult to find in stock in China's capital due to the spread SARS, which has killed 100 and infected 1,803 in Beijing. REUTERS

SINGAPORE—Stocks in Hong Kong and Singapore firmed on Monday on fresh hopes that the spread of the SARS virus may be waning outside of China, but volumes were light and the mood was cautious with the key Tokyo market on holiday.

Major currencies moved in narrow ranges in light trade, while oil prices dipped.

Singapore was the strongest stock market in Asia, with the key Straits Times Index up 1.67 percent to 1,320.95 at the midday break, its highest since April 8.

"It's a SARS-inspired rise," said Seah Hiang Hong, research head at Kim Eng Ong Asia Securities.

Hong Kong stocks were also stronger, but the territory's proximity to China and the wider impact of the disease on tourism and retailing kept a lid on the optimism.

The benchmark Hang Seng Index of 33 blue chips rose 0.81 percent to 8,879.52 after Hong Kong reported just eight new cases of SARS on Sunday, its lowest daily count since the outbreak began in mid-March.

"The market can't break through 9,000 because the SARS situation in China is still quite serious and Hong Kong's economy is closely linked to that of China," said Patrick Yiu, vice-president of sales at Kingsway SW Securities.

Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. extended gains after crude oil prices fell and on optimism that the World Health Organization may soon lift its advisory against travel to Hong Kong with SARS coming under control.

Australian stocks were flat in early afternoon trade, with the S&P/ASX 200 index up 0.1 percent at 2,975.5.

The market's biggest mover was life insurer and fund manager AMP, which slumped 35 percent to A$5.63 in the wake of a heavily discounted issue of new shares at A$5.50 each. Taiwan stocks rose a third of a percent. South Korean markets were also closed.

On foreign exchange markets, volumes were light and currencies traded in narrow ranges, with many traders reluctant to take positions with Tokyo on holiday and Europe likely to be quiet because London is also on holiday.

Many are also on the sidelines ahead of policy meetings by the Federal Reserve on Tuesday and the European Central Bank on Thursday. Both are expected to leave rates on hold.

The euro's slight pullback helped the yen move a notch higher against the dollar, though dealers said the yen's strength was limited by fears of intervention by Japanese authorities. *Reuters*

ABN Amro cuts economic growth forecasts for Asia

SINGAPORE—Economic growth will weaken across Asia this year as the costs of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) spread from consumer demand and tourism to trade and foreign investment, ABN AMRO said in a report.

The Dutch investment bank halved its forecast for Hong Kong's growth in 2003 to two percent.

Singapore's forecast was cut by almost two-thirds to one percent.

ABN lopped one percentage point off their forecast for China.

The economy, however, was still expected to grow seven percent this year.

"The impact of SARS has been particularly significant on consumption and tourism so far, but we think it may start to affect exports, not least intra-regional trade, and FDI (foreign direct investment) going forward," the report said.

Revisions to 2004 growth forecasts were much smaller, although ABN AMRO were not expecting any release in pent-up demand.

In fact, SARS had likely postponed a recovery in regional domestic demand until well into next year.

While China has the largest number of SARS cases, the greater reliance of Singapore and Hong Kong on tourist income and exports meant they would pay a heavier economic cost.

Forecasts for growth in Thailand and Malaysia were also cut quite significantly because of their dependence on tourism.

Taiwan's was lowered because it was heavily reliant on private consumption.

ABN said corporate profit margins would be hit by SARS, with health measures adding to the costs of business.

And that could place further pressure on many economies.

"Retailers may need to resort to heavy discounting in order to sell, while landlords are under pressure to cut rents, which will tend to worsen the deflationary pressure of some economies, notably Hong Kong," the report said. *Reuters*

Buffett looking at Asian companies

BERKSHIRE Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffett sings to shareholders at a reception in Omaha, Neb. AP

OMAHA, Neb.—Warren Buffett, the billionaire investor, said on Sunday he was interested in investing in Asian companies, following the recent increase of his stake in Chinese oil company PetroChina Ltd., but said bargains were hard to find.

"We've been looking at companies there (Asia)," Buffett told reporters.

"We are open to buying stocks in them, and where there is a possibility—not in China—we would buy entire businesses."

He did not elaborate on why he would not look to buy a whole business in China, though there are restrictions on foreign ownership in many industries.

Buffett made the remarks at his only scheduled press conference of the year, in Omaha, Nebraska, the day after his Berkshire Hathaway Inc. annual meeting, which attracted a record 15,000 shareholders.

Buffett, who said he owns several Asian equities in addition to PetroChina, said he monitors Japanese companies frequently, but hasn't seen many buying opportunities there, despite the slide in stock prices.

"The returns on equity are very low in Japan," he said.

"I would have thought I would find more bargains—I would have thought there would be a plateful—but we don't find lots."

He did express his long-term faith in Japan's economy.

"Japan is solid; prices just went crazy for a while."

He also conceded that acquisitions or stock purchases in Asia were more risky than in the United States: "There's a little more chance of making a mistake. But we're willing to do it."

Buffett declined to comment on his reasons for buying a stake in PetroChina, saying it was not his policy to talk about individual stocks, and he preferred to keep his strategies private.

The PetroChina investment surprised Buffett watchers, as it appeared to be a diversion from his tried and tested technique of buying cheap stocks in businesses he knows well and whose performance is easy to assess, almost entirely within the United States. *Reuters*

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STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Head Office and Branches)
As of March 26, 2003

ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Items	P	4,481,227,353
Due from Bangko Sentral		7,834,118,185
Due from Other Banks		2,234,049,190
Interbank Loans Receivable		8,189,998,638
Trading Account Securities (Net)		218,695,516
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		84,407,006,041
Loans and Discounts and Advances (Net)		106,279,348,142
Underwriting Accounts (Net)		111,074,682
Equity Investments (Net)		5,970,341,645
Bank Premises, Furniture,Fixtures & Equipment (Net)		4,640,794,220
Other Assets (Net):		
Property Owned/Acquired		13,941,280,718
Others		8,541,349,900
TOTAL ASSETS	P	246,849,282,230
LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits	P	73,334,818,474
Savings Deposits		90,610,547,226
Time Deposits		17,161,022,221
Special/Other Deposits		799,120,576
Due to Bangko Sentral		97,804,461
Due to Banks		302,395,236
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		2,098,323,816
Bills Payable:		
BSP-Rediscounting/Special Programs		822,828,942
Interbank Borrowings		3,710,905,200
Deposits Substitutes		237,768,002
Others		25,461,432,912
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		3,197,956,719
Other Liabilities		8,060,333,834
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	225,895,257,619
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		
Capital Stock	P	9,700,000,000
Surplus		7,125,356,347
Surplus Reserves		4,165,412,077
Other Capital Accounts		(36,743,813)
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		20,954,024,611
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	246,849,282,230
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	P	5,859,025,051
Bills for Collection		867,264,204
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		9,367,245,551
Spot/Future Exchange Bought		(800,355,546)
Assets Held under Trust and Investment Management Agreements		11,679,503,413
Invested in:		
- Government Securities		7,223,637,309
- Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stocks		25,625,926
- Loans and Discounts		1,702,857,210
- Other Assets		2,727,382,968
Accountabilities:		
- Trust and Other Fiduciary		1,866,106,092
- Common Trust Funds		2,659,766,052
- Investment/Fund Management		7,153,631,269
Other Contingent Accounts		31,008,738,938
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	57,981,421,611

Other Information

1. Deposits of:		
a. Government	P	120,436,600,018
b. Banks		4,147,555,957
c. Trust Department		154,684,222
2. Compliance with Magna Carta Law:		
a. Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 6% (Small Enterprises)		252.37%
b. Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 2% (Medium Enterprises)		304.20%
3. Amount of Non-Performing Loans		26,598,469,727
4. Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio		20.45 %
5. Amount of Classified Loans and Other Risk Assets		49,654,971,583
6. General Provision for Loan Losses		1,167,692,722
7. Specific Provision for Loan Losses		14,448,686,931
8. Return on Equity (ROE)		8.26%
9. Amount of DOSRI Loans/Advances		2,129,808,473
10. Ratio of DOSRI Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio		1.64%
11. Amount of Past Due DOSRI Loans/Advances		17,996

*Includes Loans classified as 'Loss' which are fully covered by Allowance for Probable Losses amounting to P2,767,393,006.08

We, ANDRES C. SARMIENTO and MARGARITO B. TEVES of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above Statement of Condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Sgd. ANDRES C. SARMIENTO
FVP-Controllership Group

Sgd. MARGARITO B. TEVES
President and CEO

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 30th day of April, 2003 in the City of Manila, affiants exhibiting to me their Residence Certificate No 12700389, issued in the City of Manila on January 3, 2003 and Residence Certificate No. 12722279 issued in the City of Manila on January 14, 2003.

Doc. No 87
Page No 19
Book No III
Series of 2003

CHRISA SHEILA T. PIMENTEL
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2003
PTR No. 1281446
Issued on September 4, 2002
Manila

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Bank and Financial Subsidiaries)
As of March 26, 2003

ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Items	P	4,482,865,820
Due from Bangko Sentral		7,834,118,185
Due from Other Banks		2,333,750,516
Interbank Loans Receivable		8,189,998,638
Trading Account Securities (Net)		218,695,516
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		84,498,473,228
Loans and Discounts and Advances (Net)		106,201,687,274
Underwriting Accounts (Net)		111,074,682
Equity Investments (Net)		5,322,559,834
Bank Premises, Furniture,Fixtures & Equipment (Net)		4,742,037,624
Other Assets (Net):		
Property Owned/Acquired		13,960,786,136
Others		9,580,498,473
TOTAL ASSETS	P	247,476,545,926
LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits	P	73,319,941,303
Savings Deposits		90,589,885,418
Time Deposits		17,161,022,221
Special/Other Deposits		799,120,576
Due to Bangko Sentral		97,804,461
Due to Banks		302,395,236
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		2,118,060,216
Bills Payable:		
BSP-Rediscounting/Special Programs		822,828,942
Interbank Borrowings		3,710,905,200
Deposits Substitutes		237,768,002
Others		25,461,432,912
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		3,823,535,574
Other Liabilities		8,071,965,632
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	226,516,665,693
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		
Capital Stock	P	9,700,000,000
Surplus		6,992,244,338
Surplus Reserves		4,304,379,708
Other Capital Accounts		(36,743,813)
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		20,959,880,233
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	247,476,545,926
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	P	5,859,025,051
Bills for Collection		867,264,204
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		9,367,245,551
Spot/Future Exchange Bought		(800,355,546)
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TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	57,981,421,611

Other Information

1. Deposits of:		
a. Government	P	120,436,600,018
b. Banks		4,147,555,957
c. Trust Department		154,684,222

2. List of Bank's Financial Subsidiaries
a. LBP Leasing Corporation
b. LBP Financial Services, SPA
c. LBP Remittance Co., USA

We, ANDRES C. SARMIENTO and MARGARITO B. TEVES of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above Consolidated Statement of Condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Sgd. ANDRES C. SARMIENTO
FVP-Controllership Group

Sgd. MARGARITO B. TEVES
President and CEO

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 30th day of April, 2003 in the City of Manila, affiants exhibiting to me their Residence Certificate No. 12700389, issued in the City of Manila on January 3, 2003 and Residence Certificate No. 12722279 issued in the City of Manila on January 14, 2003.

Doc. No 88
Page No 19
Book No III
Series of 2003

CHRISA SHEILA T. PIMENTEL
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2003
PTR No. 1281446
Issued on September 4, 2002
Manila

Member: Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (Deposits insured up to P100,000.00)

Euro loses steam vs dollar, Japanese yen finds footing

SINGAPORE—The euro lost some ground against the dollar and the yen on Monday as traders locked in profits on its run to four-year highs as they readied for policy meetings of the major central banks this week.

The euro's slight pullback helped the yen move a notch higher against the dollar in a market thinned by holidays in Tokyo and London, though dealers said the yen's upside was limited on fears of intervention by Japanese authorities.

"The market will consolidate before taking fresh positions and that is what's happening," said a dealer at a Singapore bank, adding there was a reluctance to sell the dollar beyond the lows it hit on Friday.

"People want to cut back some of their exposure to short dollar positions before moving ahead," he added.

The market was also cautious after a Jiji Press report on Friday said Japan would call for yen-weakening intervention as part of a stimulus package expected to be announced this week.

The report had accelerated the yen's move away from a one-month high of 118.12 per dollar hit on Thursday.

There was a lack of momentum at the start of the week as players consolidated their positions ahead of US non-manufacturing ISM data due later in the day and meetings by the Federal Reserve and European Central Bank later in the week.

Euro/yen pulled back to around 133.40 yen from Friday's four-year high of 133.78, while the euro also edged down against the dollar towards $1.12, having hit a four-year high of $1.1287 on Thursday.

The US Federal Reserve meets on Tuesday and is expected to leave the fed funds rate unchanged at 1.25 percent. *Reuters*

HK March retail sales seen down

HONG KONG—Hong Kong is expected to report on Tuesday that retail sales fell sharply in March as the deadly SARS outbreak in the second half of the month devastated already weak consumer confidence.

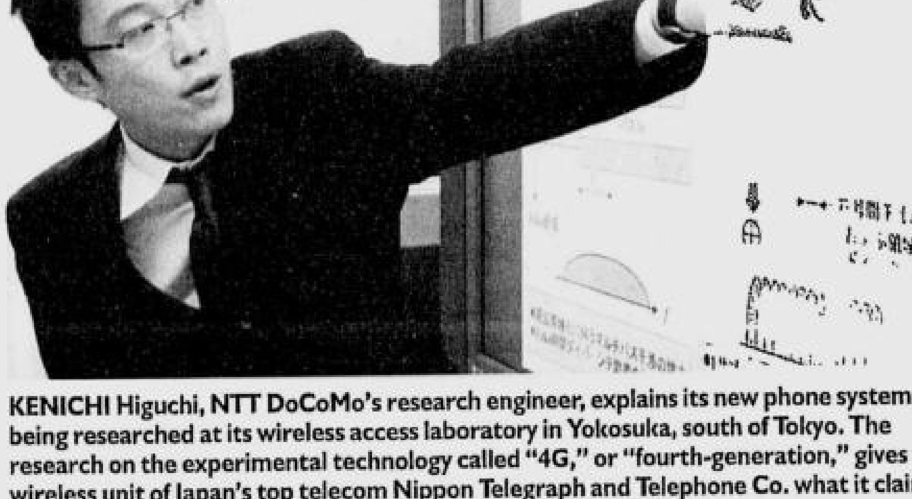
But the full effect of the disease will only be reflected in April, when the outbreak peaked. Consumers, afraid of catching the virus, shunned public places such as restaurants and stores while many travellers cancelled business trips or vacations to the territory, the worst hit area after mainland China.

Ten economists polled by Reuters gave a median forecast of a 13 percent slide in the value of retail sales in March compared with a year ago. They expect the volume of retail sales to fall 11 percent when the government announces the figures on Tuesday afternoon.

"I foresee even worse ahead," said Henry Tsoi, senior economist at Hang Seng Bank. "I think we'll see a decline of around 20 percent in value terms in April. In value terms, April could be the worst-ever month for Hong Kong."

The worst month for retailers in recent years was August 1998, in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis, when retail sales plunged 20 percent in value year-on-year.

A travel warning by the World Health Organization (WHO) against coming to Hong Kong due to the outbreak has dealt a massive blow to the economy. Tourist receipts account for six percent of Hong Kong's gross domestic product. *Reuters*



KENICHI Higuchi, NTT DoCoMo's research engineer, explains its new phone system being researched at its wireless access laboratory in Yokosuka, south of Tokyo. The research on the experimental technology called "4G," or "fourth-generation," gives the wireless unit of Japan's top telecom Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Co. what it claims is a major head start of its competition. AP

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- **APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM** - on the job training for a period of six (6) months for graduates of technical/vocational courses (Technician, Electrician, Mechanic, Lineman)

Qualification/Requirements:

1. Not more than twenty five (25) years of age
2. Residents of South Luzon Areas (Laguna, Quezon, Cavite, Batangas, Bicol Areas)
3. Must pass the TransCo psychological examination for Apprenticeship Program
4. Must pass the TransCo psychological and technical examinations for Cadetship Program
5. Official Transcript of Records (no failing grades in major subjects)

Interested applicants should personally apply and accomplish application form at HR/GS Section, San Vicente, Biñan, Laguna from **May 5 to 16, 2003** at 1:30 p.m.

For Cadetship Program, only those who pass the psychological examination will be qualified to take the technical examination scheduled on **May 31, 2003 (Saturday)**.

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION
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(PDI - May 6 2003)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of late SIMPLICIA L. VILLARANTE has been extrajudicially settled by her heirs as per Doc.#209 Page#42 Book#6 Series of 2003 before Notary Public Al Harith D. Sali of Quezon City. PDI-April 22,29 & May 6, 2003

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON GOOD GOVERNMENT
IRC BUILDING #82 EDSA
MANDALUYONG CITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO REBID

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), Region 8, invites interested parties to participate in the sealed bidding for the lease of the ground floor of the People's Center and Library located at Real St., Tacloban City as venue for "Summer Trade Exhibit" from **May 15, 2003 to July 15, 2003.**

The bidding guidelines will be available at PCGG Office, Asset Management Department, 3rd Floor, IRC Building, 82 EDSA Mandaluyong City and at the PCGG Regional Office, Nipa Hut, Jones St., Tacloban City, until **May 8, 2003**. For inquiries, please contact Darwin C. Altea at Telephone No. 726-0034 and Renor O. Dauag at Telephone No. (053) 321-3413.

Pre-qualification requirements should be submitted on or before **May 8, 2003**, while bids will be received, opened and tabulated at 10:00 A.M. on **May 9, 2003** in the presence of the bidders at the PCGG Office, Asset Management Department, 3rd Floor, IRC Building, 82 EDSA, Mandaluyong City.

(Sgd.) **RENOR O. DAUAG**
Regional Representative

(PDI--May 6, 7 & 8, 2003)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
12th Judicial Region
BRANCH 19
Isulan Sultan Kudarat

IN THE MATTER OF CHANGE OF NAME OF DANIEL JOSE MARIA C. BARILEA, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS JOSE MARIE BARILEA AND DANIEL MARI G. BARILEA, ALIAS JOMARI,

SPL. PROC. NO. 311

DANIEL JOSE MARIA C. BARILEA,
Petitioner,
– versus –
THE CITY AND LOCAL REGISTRARS OF DUMAGUETE CITY AND ISULAN, SULTAN KUDARAT, respectively,
Respondents.
x-----------------------------x

ORDER

A verified petition has been filed before this Court by the petitioner Daniel Jose Maria C. Barilea, praying that after due notice and hearing thereof, an Order be issued authorizing the change of his first name, from DANIEL JOSE MARIA C. Barilea to DANIEL MARI C. Barilea, as well as, the change of his first name as entered in his Certificate of Marriage, from JOSE MARI Barilea to DANIEL MARI Barilea.

Finding the said petition to be sufficient in form and substance, let the petition be set for hearing to May 13, 2003 at 8:30 o'clock in the morning and 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon, in the sala of this Court at the Hall of Justice, Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, on which date, time and place, any interested person is hereby ordered to appear and show cause, if any, why the petition should not be granted.

Let this Order be published at the expense of the petitioner in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines, once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks, the last publication of which should not be later than May 7, 2003.

Let copies of this Order and of the Petition be served upon the Office of the Solicitor General, 134 Amorsolo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City, as well as the respondents, and the same be posted on the Bulletin Board in the premises of this Court.

SO ORDERED.

Given this 19th day of March 2003, at Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines.

(Sgd.) GERMAN M. MALCAMPO
Regional Trial Judge

(PDI-May 2, 4 & 6, 2003)

Agence France-Presse,
a global news agency, requires an
ENGINEER
In the Manila bureau.

Candidates should have the qualifications and experience to handle all technical needs of the bureau and maintain smooth flow of services to clients. The engineer will liaize with the regional HQ and must be fluent in English and have good organizing skills.

Applications, including full academic details and working experience, should be sent by e-mail not later than May 12 to:

p.parameswaran@afp.com

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TransCo

National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: April 8, 2003
LOAN NO.: MIYAZAWA
Contract No.: Sp01.SPTL.Mm-0338

1. The ***National Power Corporation (NPC)*** has received a loan from the ***Miyazawa Funds*** for ***Zamboanga City Area 138 kV Transmission Line Project*** and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract ***Supply and Delivery of Transmission Line Materials for the Sangali - Pitogo 138 kV Transmission Line Project.***
2. The ***National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO)*** administering the bidding of the said project, now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply and delivery of:

   Schedule I - Steel Towers, Leg/Body Extensions, Templates and Accessories

   Schedule II - Power Conductors, Aluminum-Clad Overhead Groundwire, Tower Footing Ground Wire and Accessories

   Schedule III - Insulator Assemblies, Line Materials and Hardwares

   Schedule IV - Optical Fiber Groundwire (OPGW), Tower Attachment Assemblies and Accessories.
3. Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect and acquire the bidding documents at the ***Office of the Manager, Bids and Contracts Management Department, 2nd Floor, Building 2, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City (Zip Code 1104), Philippines, Tel./Fax Number: 921-2308.***
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders starting **April 15, 2003** upon submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ***ten thousand pesos (Php 10,000.00).***
5. A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two (2)-sealed envelopes, one (1) containing the technical proposal and one (1) containing the price proposal. Initially only the technical proposals are opened. Technical proposals which are submitted by non-qualified bidders or which are not substantially responsive are rejected. The substantially responsive technical proposals that have been submitted by qualified bidders are discussed with the bidders and the bidders are requested for full compliance. The bidders may or may not submit a supplementary price proposal, which contain the changes in price resulting from the discussed changes in the technical proposals. The original price proposal and the supplementary price proposal are opened simultaneously in public.
6. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of:

   Schedule I - Forty Thousand Three Hundred US dollars (US$40,300)

   Schedule II - Seventeen Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty US dollars (US$17,720)

   Schedule III - Thirty Three Thousand Four Hundred Eighty US dollars (US$33,480)

   Schedule IV - Eleven Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety US dollars (US$11,990)

   The bid security must be included with the technical proposal.

   The deadline for the submission of bids will be on **June 17, 2003** at 1:30 p.m. at the aforementioned address. Late submissions will be rejected.
7. The technical proposals together with the bid security will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
8. The price proposals will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the time and date and at the address to be advised by the Employer after approval of the evaluation of the technical proposals.
9. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any or all Bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
10. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN**
Chairman
Bids and Award Committee

(PDI - May 3, 6, 14 & 22, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Regional Office, Zamboanga City
Tel. No. (062) 9911828 Fax No. (062) 9911339

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority (NFA) invites all interested Contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the increase in floor elevation and improvement of the drainage system of the 200,000 Cavans Capacity NFA Warehouse in Molave, Zamboanga del Sur. The project has an approved budget of P5,617,739.00 and contract duration of 150 calendar days.

The work calls for the supply of labor, materials, machinery, tools and equipment including supervision in the complete execution of the project.

Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "Pass/Fail," criteria and only Eligible Bidder shall be invited by NFA in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the contractor's offer to the contract under bidding subject to Postqualification before an award is made. Bid prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be rejected and returned outright.

Eligibility Forms are available for issuance at the NFA Regional Office, Zamboanga City on **May 14-15, 2003**, only upon submission of a Letter of Intent, presentation of the original or authenticated renewal of Contractor's License, Certificate of Good Standing from CIAP and payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00

One original and two photocopies of the duly accomplished eligibility statements must be submitted at NFA Regional Office not later than **May 23, 2003.**

Bid documents shall be issued to eligible contractors on **May 30, 2003** also at the Regional Office, only upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P4,000.00.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **June 11, 2003**, 2:00 R.M. at the NFA Regional Office Conference Hall, Gov. Ramos Ave., Zamboanga City.

Deadline for submission of bids is on **June 27, 2003** at 1:15 P.M. after which the opening of bids shall immediately follow. Venue is at the NFA Regional Office Conference Hall, Zamboanga City.

All particulars relative to Bid Security, Performance Security and bidding procedures shall be governed by the provisions of Executive Order No. 40 and its Approved Implementing Rules and Regulations and as indicated in the Tender Documents.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY/INFORMALITY OF THE BIDS RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY.

(Sgd.) ERNESTO M. MACASINAG
Regional Director

(PDI – April 29 & May 6, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 90, QUEZON CITY

IN RE: PETITION FOR
CORPORATE REHABILITATION OF –
SPECIAL PROCEEDING NO. Q.-03-047
SERENITY MEMORIAL PARK, INC.,
Petitioner.
x - x

STAY ORDER

Before this court is a verified petition/application for rehabilitation filed by the above-named petitioner:

Briefly, the petitioner contends that on the basis of projected market conditions for the next five (5) years, it has a good chance of being rehabilitated. The rehabilitation plan calls for the increase in sales through an aggressive marketing sales force, the improvement and full development of the Serenity Memorial Park project in Caloocan City to attract more buyers within the community, the development and operation of its two (2) Davao City properties as memorial parks, the restructuring of its GSIS loan of PHP 200,000,000.00 (principal amount), the adoption of a more aggressive approach geared towards the extensive collection of its receivables, among other things. Consequently, the petitioner prays for the issuance of a Stay Order pending proceedings before this Court.

A careful examination of the petition shows that it conforms substantially with Section 2, Rule 4 of the Interim Rules of Procedure on Corporate Rehabilitation (see also Supreme Court Resolution *en banc* in A.M. No. 00-8-10-SC). This Court therefore finds the petition to be sufficient in form and substance.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, this Court issues a Stay Order, in accordance with Section 6, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules, as follows:

1.) Appointing Mr. Rodolfo F. Salanga, a certified public accountant by profession, as rehabilitation receiver who shall be considered as an officer of the court and who shall have the powers, duties and functions as provided in Section 14, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules. The rehabilitation receiver must post a bond of PHP1,000,000.00 before entering upon his powers, duties and functions and must take an oath, as provided under Section 15, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules. The petitioner is directed to serve immediately a copy of this Stay Order upon the rehabilitation receiver, Mr. Rodolfo F. Salanga who shall manifest his acceptance or non-acceptance of his appointment not later than (10) days from receipt hereof;

2.) Staying enforcement of all claims, whether for money or otherwise and whether such enforcement is by court action or otherwise, against the petitioner, and its guarantors and sureties not solidarily liable with the petitioner including the staying of proceedings of collection cases filed against the petitioner, and the staying of the enforcement/implementation of application/s for extra-judicial foreclosure sale/s and actual foreclosure sale/s, if any, against the real and personal properties of the petitioner;

3.) Prohibiting the petitioner from selling, encumbering, transferring, or disposing in any manner any of its properties except in the ordinary course of business;

4.) Prohibiting the petitioner from making any payment of its liabilities outstanding as at the date of the filing of the Petition (April 2, 2003);

5.) Prohibiting the suppliers of the petitioner from withholding supply of goods and services in the ordinary course of business for as long as the petitioner makes payments for the services and goods supplied after the issuance of this Stay Order;

6.) Directing the petitioner to pay in full all administrative expenses incurred after the issuance of this Stay Order

The initial hearing on the petition is set on May 27, 2003 at 2:00 PM at the session room of Branch 90 of this Court located at the Ground Floor of the Hall of Justice Building, Quezon City Hall complex, Quezon City. All creditors and all interested parties including the Securities and Exchange Commission are directed to file with this Court and serve upon the petitioner a verified comment on or opposition to the petition, with supporting affidavits and documents, not later than ten (10) days before the date of the initial hearing as set forth above, and they are put on notice that their failure to do so will bar them from participating in the proceedings before this Court. All creditors and all interested parties are further directed to secure from this Court copies of the petition and its annexes within such time as to enable them to file their verified comment on or opposition to the petition and to prepare them for the initial hearing of the petition, and to attain this purpose, the petitioner is ordered to file with this Court initially fifteen (15) additional copies of the petition and its annexes within ten (10) days from receipt hereof

The petitioner is furthermore directed by this Court to publish a copy of this Order in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and one other newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines with widespread circulation in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao if it is a newspaper other than the herein-named newspaper, considering the presence of creditors and the location of properties in Luzon and Mindanao as alleged in the petition, once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks, with the last publication effected at least three (3) weeks prior to the date of initial hearing as set forth above, for wider dissemination to all interested persons, at the expense of the petitioner

The Process Server of this Court is ordered to serve immediately copies of this Stay Order upon: 1) Mr. Marcelino F. Cuan (the duly authorized representative/official of the petitioner) No. 22 Maaralin Street, Diliman, Quezon City; 2) Atty. Ernesto C. Perez, Suite 507, ALPAP II Building, Trade Street corner Investment Drive, Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, 1770 Muntinlupa City; 3) Mr. Rodolfo F. Salanga, 146 G. Diaz Street, BF Resort Village, Las Piñas City; 4) the Honorable Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission, EDSA (Epifanio De Los Santos Avenue), Mandaluyong, Metro Manila.

SO ORDERED
Quezon City, April 8, 2003

(Sgd). **REYNALDO B. DAWAY**
Presiding Judge

(PDI - April 30 & May 6, 2003)

DBP

Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on May 21, 2003, 2:00 p.m., Auditorium of the DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City for the following properties on CASH BASIS:

CODE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION		MINIMUM BID
REAL ESTATE				
MANILA				
	No. 6 Balete Drive, Quezon City	4 condominium units with patio and garage:		
AMD-ED-25a		2-units, 261.70 m² (CCT Nos. N-24864 & 24865)	P	3,140,000.00
AMD-ED-25b		1-unit, 157.60 m² (CCT No. N-24867)	P	1,891,200.00
AMD-ED-25c		1-unit, 130.85 m² (CCT No. N-24866)	P	1,570,200.00
AMD-MR-26a	Ocean Park Ave., Ocean Park Subd. (Bagbag), Quezon City	479 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. N-213870)	P	2,155,500.00
AMD-MR-26b	Vinegar St., Llenado Subd., Karuhatan, Valenzuela City	2 adjoining vacant residential lots with total area of 465 m² (TCT Nos. V-61056 and V-61057) with fence	P	1,802,000.00
AMD-ED-27a	Monserrat Hills St., La Milagrosa Village, Marikina Heights, Marikina City	300 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. 275009)	P	557,000.00
AMD-ED-27b		300 m² vacant residential lot (TCT No. 275203)	P	557,000.00
BATANGAS				
AMD-JB-28a	Bo. San Felix, Sto. Tomas	3 adjoining residential lots with total area of 1,672 m² (T.D. Nos 009-1676R, 009-1678R & 009-1679R) with bldgs. and imprvts.	P	2,888,100.00
AMD-JB-28b	Liza Cmpd., San Roque, Sto. Tomas	325 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-89539) with bldg. and imprvts.	P	1,520,000.00
AMD-ED-29	Bgy. Sta. Rita (Carsada), Batangas City	2 adjoining semi-commercial lots with total area of 590 m² (TCT Nos. T-43159 and T-43160)	P	2,100,000.00
BULACAN				
	Bo. Pulong Yantok, Angat	Vacant residential/commercial lots:		
CSP-03a		632 m² (TCT No. T-41100 M)	P	1,074,400.00
CSP-03b		530 m² (TCT No. T-41101 M)	P	901,000.00
CAVITE				
AMD-ED-30	Lot 3, Blk 9, Regino St., Prima Homes, Bucandala III, Alapan, Imus	41 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-1036389) with bldg. and imprvts.	P	196,900.00
NUEVA ECIJA				
AMD-JB-31a	Pabalan Subd., Abar 1st, San Jose City	283 m² residential lot (TCT No. 12490)	P	79,300.00
AMD-JB-31b		283 m² residential lot (TCT No. 12491)	P	79,300.00
AMD-JB-31c		198 m² residential lot (TCT No. 12493)	P	55,500.00
AMD-JB-31d		198 m² residential lot (TCT No. 12485)	P	55,500.00
PANGASINAN				
AMD-MR-32	Pagal District, San Carlos City	4 parcels of adjoining industrial lots with total area of 11,200 m² (TCT Nos. 32082 to 32085) with bldgs. and imprvts.	P	14,513,000.00
QUEZON				
AMD-MR-33	Mamala, Sariaya	62,108 m² interior lot (TCT No. T-392734) with bldgs. and imprvts.	P	24,613,700.00
RIZAL				
AMD-ED-34	Bo. San Isidro, Antipolo City	2 adjoining interior vacant farm lots with total area of 2,537 m² (TCT Nos. 373101 and 373102)	P	1,014,300.00
AMD-ED-25d	Bermuda Heights Subd., Bos. Ibayo and San Isidro, Antipolo City	336 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403152)	P	537,600.00
AMD-ED-25e		337 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403153)	P	539,200.00
AMD-ED-25f		300 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403154)	P	480,000.00
AMD-ED-25g		277 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403155)	P	443,200.00
AMD-ED-25h		322 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403156)	P	515,200.00
AMD-ED-25i		287 m² subdivision lot (TCT No. 403157)	P	459,200.00
CHATTELS (sale on "as-is, where-is" basis)				
AMD-MR-35	La Campana Cmpd., EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City	1 lot heavy equipment for road construction	P	2,400.00 to 240,000.00

BIDDERS ARE REMINDED:

1. To inspect the properties to determine their actual condition before the bidding;
2. To submit in DBP's official bid form available at the AMD-Acquired Assets, 2nd Floor, DBP Head Office during office hours; and
3. To be on time. No bids will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commences. The sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Bank.

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers:
893-7172 or 818-9511 loc. 2144/2218/3404 for Code starting with AMD; and
926-1686 or 818-9511 loc. 1411 for CSP-03.

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI--May 5 & 6, 2003)

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines

Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim
Office of the Undersecretary

Telefax: 633-93-42
Direct Line: 631-96-40
Trunk Line: 632-13-61 locals 2007/2221

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

DepEd -- BNFE - 03-04-01

The Department of Education through the Bureau of Non-Formal Education is inviting all suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Printing and Delivery of Translated Basic Literacy Learning Materials. For purposes of record and in compliance with the law, the Department has an approved budget of P2.4 million for printing, delivery and administrative cost.

All interested printers may avail of the bidding documents upon submission of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00) starting **May 5 - 16, 2003** at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm. 112-A, Mabini Bldg., DepEd Complex, Pasig City or visit the DepEd Website at http://www.deped.gov.ph.

A pre-bid conference will be held on **May 16, 2003**, 10:00 AM at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Bldg. 1, DepEd Complex, Pasig City. The deadline for the submission and opening of bids shall be on **June 2, 2003** at the same time and place mentioned above.

DepEd-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids. DepEd-BAC further reserves the right to declare a failure of bid, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary
Chairman, DepEd-BAC

(PDI--May 3, 6 & 10, 2003)

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look for Ms. Grace Wong

HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL

6th Flr., Atrium Bldg., Makati Ave., Makati City

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND SUBMIT PROPOSAL

The Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), pursuant to Proclamation No. 284 series of 2002 designating it as the administrator of the 7-hectare property in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig which was reserved for the AFP Off-base Housing, hereby invites all interested contractors duly licensed by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) with Large "B" category for General Building to prequalify and submit proposals for the Master Planning, Design, Construction and Financing under a turnkey contractual arrangement of the AFP Off-base Housing Project.

Interested parties may obtain the prequalification documents from the office of the HUDCC Vice Chairman, 8th Flr., Atrium Bldg., Makati Ave., Makati City, after paying the corresponding non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00). The deadline for submission of duly accomplished forms together with the required prequalification statements/documents is on **May 21, 2003.**

The HUDCC reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals, to waive any informality found therein, or to accept such proposals as may be considered advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **AMADO S. BAGATSING**
Vice Chairman, HUDCC

Contact: GEE-ANN P. ARNALDO
Tels: 812-0735, 893-3700
811-4401 loc. 448

(PDI--April 29 & May 6, 2003)

AUCTION

FAST FOOD RESTAURANT FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT

IN OVER 200 LOTS INCLUDING: -

UNUSED RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT - (6) SILVER KING Under Counter Chillers; Stainless Steel Stands, Stainless Steel Condiment Wells, Stainless Steel Counter Fillers, TOPPO Stock Level Lights, Egg Rings; Drive Through Drink Cabinets, TOTO Basins, EDLUND Industrial Can Openers, etc
RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT - (19) WINSTON Stainless Steel Holding Cabinets; SILVER KING Under Counter Chillers; (4) HATCO Heat Chutes, LANG/TOASTMASTER Flat Grill w/ Stand Hood, RANDELL Upright Freezer/Chiller, Stainless Steel Preparation Tables; HATCO Heat Chutes, Apple Pie Baskets; Stainless Steel Storage Cabinets; Stainless Steel Beverage Tables, Stainless Steel Shelf Units, Fry Baskets, Pancake Dispensers, etc.
RESTAURANT FURNITURE - Bar Tables, Bar Stools, Chairs, Fibre Glass, Booth Type Furniture, Site Racks, etc
MISCELLANEOUS - CR Partitions; Stainless Steel Que Rails; Asstd. Transformers; Neon Lights, Street/Flood Lamp Posts, Glass Paneling, etc.

AT: 106 SOUTH SCIENCE AVENUE, LAGUNA TECHNO PARK,
BGY. DON JOSE, STA. ROSA, LAGUNA
AUCTION DATE: FRIDAY 9TH MAY 2003 10:30AM SHARP
VIEWING DATE: THURSDAY 8TH MAY 2003
9:00AM - 5:00PM AND MORNING OF SALE DAY
REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT: PHP20,000 (UPON REGISTRATION)

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US-Singapore deal to boost US ties with SE Asia

SINGAPORE—Singapore and the United States are on Tuesday to sign a landmark free-trade agreement expected to bolster Washington's economic and political ties with Southeast Asia.

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong will sign the US-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, the first between the US and an Asian country, with President George W. Bush at a White House ceremony.

The signing will come more than two years after then US president Bill Clinton and Goh discussed the idea of liberalizing bilateral trade during a nocturnal golf game at an Asia-Pacific summit in Brunei in November 2000.

Singapore will eliminate tariffs on US exports and ease conditions for entry by American professionals such as lawyers, engineers and architects.

The city-state will open its market to US banks and firms focusing on the biomedical sciences, software, research and development, and entertainment, in addition to traditional areas like headquarter services, manufacturing and logistics.

Singapore Trade Minister George Yeo said the FTA will also put special emphasis on high-tech concerns like the protection of intellectual property and the rules of electronic commerce.

With most of the city-state's exports to the US already subject to low tariffs, analysts said the biggest benefit for Singapore is that it will be positioned as a gateway for US investments into Southeast Asia, a combined market of 550 million people.

Song Seng Wun, a regional economist with GK Goh brokerage here, said the island-republic's more decisive response to the SARS outbreak compared to regional rival Hong Kong could prompt US companies, especially those in the services sector, to take advantage of the FTA and relocate here.

"Because of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome scare, the FTA might benefit Singapore a bit more than I thought earlier, at the expense of Hong Kong," he told AFP.

"I am starting to hear companies with a regional base in Hong Kong which have been exposed to all kinds of disease scares that are thinking of moving out."

Around 1,300 US companies have a presence in Singapore, many of them regional headquarters.

Politically, Singapore is one of Washington's staunchest Asian allies in the war against terrorism and the Iraq campaign.

Singapore is the 11th largest trading partner of the US economic superpower, with bilateral trade totaling around $34 billion annually.

"We believe that this agreement cements that relationship with a key strategic partner further, and will serve as a model for pending negotiations with other Asean member countries," the American Chamber of Commerce here said in a statement.

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But the company's huge successes over the years have been tempered by years of slumping sales and a lawsuit filed recently by two former executives, who charge they were fired for refusing to go along with alleged fraudulent accounting practices that inflated earnings since 1997.

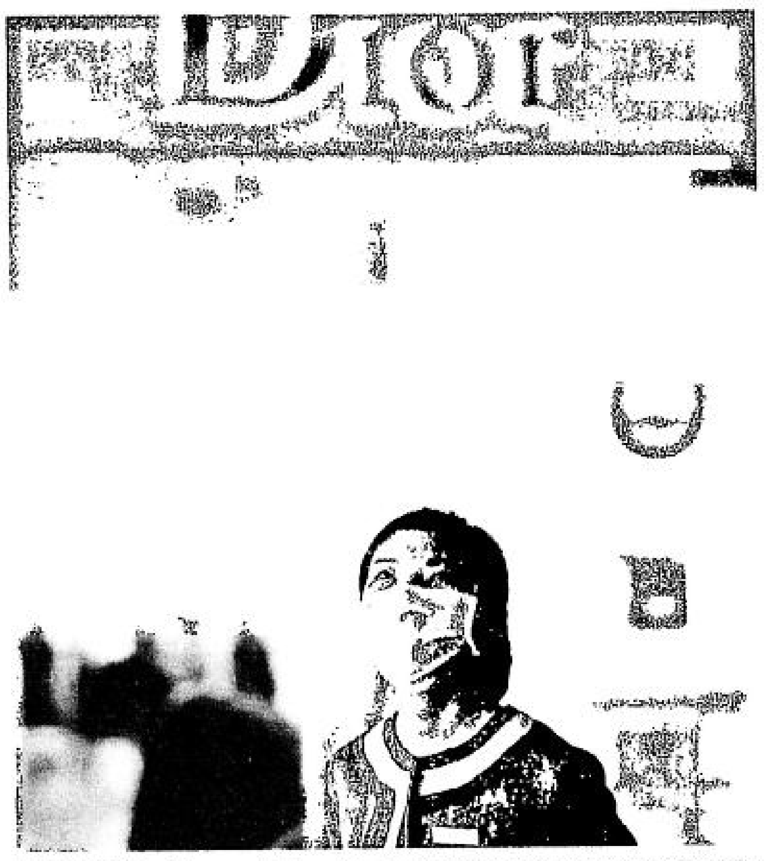
Levi Strauss calls the charges "false."

Financial and marketing analysts say the problems could be distracting for a company that has vowed to boost revenues by between two and five percent this year while fighting to regain market share lost to more youth-oriented brands such as Diesel.

The company was founded in 1853 by Levi Strauss, a 24-year-old Bavarian immigrant.

Twenty years later, he stitched the first pair of blue jeans and, in doing so, created a pair of denim work pants for the cowboys of the American West which over time became an international symbol of cool.

American troops fighting in World War Two introduced Levis to Europe and Asia. And in 1950s Hollywood movies like "The Wild One" and "Rebel Without a Cause," Marlon Brando and James Dean made jeans a statement of rebellion—a message that resonated through the flower-power generation of the 1960s. *Reuters*



A CHINESE waitress walks by a foreign boutique at a hotel in Beijing. The World Bank said it is confident that Asian economies will come out of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) crisis and remain attractive investment destinations, however, the economic growth forecast for China will likely come down by 0.5 percent this year and added that the drop could even be one percent if SARS continued to spread. AFP

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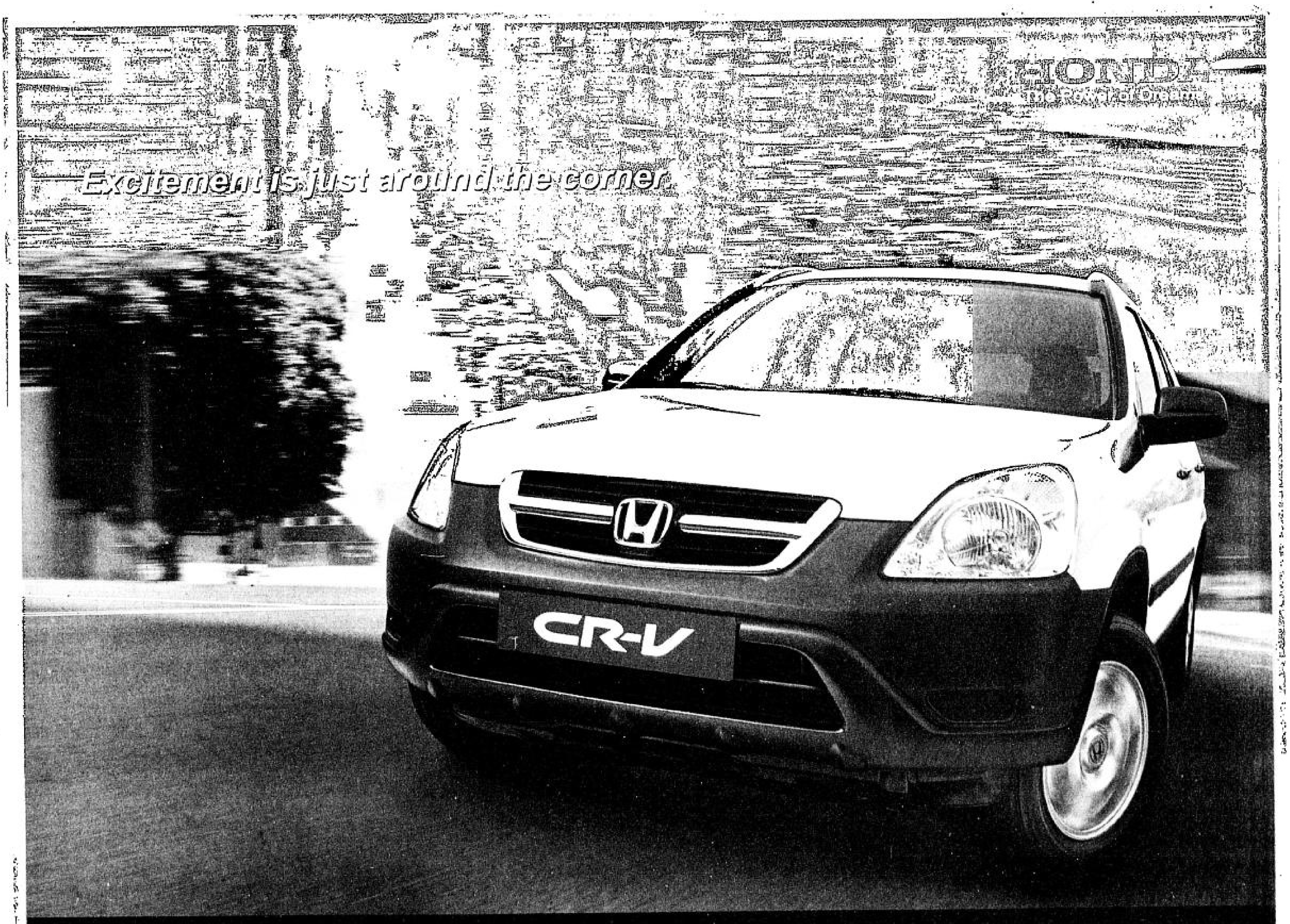
After hearing tales about a master salesman who earned enough commissions to do his rounds in a chauffeured limousine, Paulucci got a job with the same company and found he was a natural. Within seven years, he was making more than the president of the company. *Reuters*



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US-Singapore deal to boost US ties with SE Asia

SINGAPORE—Singapore and the United States are on Tuesday to sign a landmark free-trade agreement expected to bolster Washington's economic and political ties with Southeast Asia.

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong will sign the US-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, the first between the US and an Asian country, with President George W. Bush at a White House ceremony.

The signing will come more than two years after then US president Bill Clinton and Goh discussed the idea of liberalizing bilateral trade during a nocturnal golf game at an Asia-Pacific summit in Brunei in November 2000.

Singapore will eliminate tariffs on US exports and ease conditions for entry by American professionals such as lawyers, engineers and architects.

The city-state will open its market to US banks and firms focusing on the biomedical sciences, software, research and development, and entertainment, in addition to traditional areas like headquarter services, manufacturing and logistics.

Singapore Trade Minister George Yeo said the FTA will also put special emphasis on high-tech concerns like the protection of intellectual property and the rules of electronic commerce.

With most of the city-state's exports to the US already subject to low tariffs, analysts said the biggest benefit for Singapore is that it will be positioned as a gateway for US investments into Southeast Asia, a combined market of 550 million people.

Song Seng Wun, a regional economist with GK Goh brokerage here, said the island-republic's more decisive response to the SARS outbreak compared to regional rival Hong Kong could prompt US companies, especially those in the services sector, to take advantage of the FTA and relocate here.

"Because of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome scare, the FTA might benefit Singapore a bit more than I thought earlier, at the expense of Hong Kong," he told AFP.

"I am starting to hear companies with a regional base in Hong Kong which have been exposed to all kinds of disease scares that are thinking of moving out."

Around 1,300 US companies have a presence in Singapore, many of them regional headquarters.

Politically, Singapore is one of Washington's staunchest Asian allies in the war against terrorism and the Iraq campaign.

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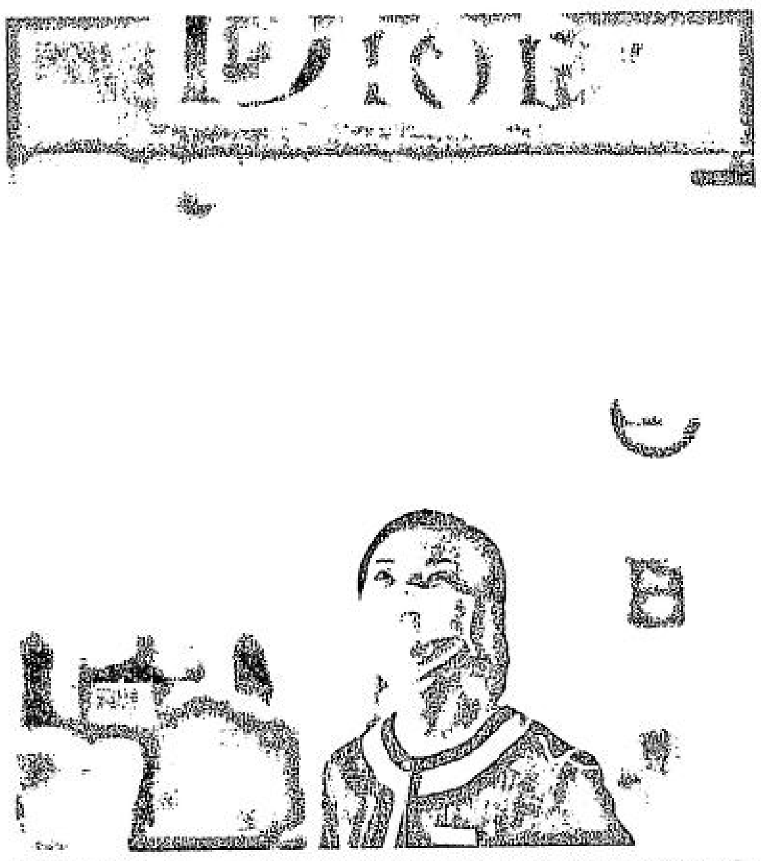

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PNOC
The Energy Company

The Board of Directors, Officers and Staff of the Philippine National Oil Company express their heartfelt condolences to the family of

FILEMON TOMIMBANG

March 8, 1917 - May 4, 2003

Who peacefully joined our Heavenly Father at the age of 86.

His beloved wife **Lucia**, sons **Lito** and **Jess**, and other relatives request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

A mass will be held on May 6, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. at #34 Eisenhower St., Annapolis, Greenhills.

HIS EMINENCE, JAIME L. CARDINAL SIN
Archbishop of Manila

The auxiliary bishops and clergy of Manila; bereaved brother Abelardo; sisters-in-law **Lilia**, **Priscilla**, **Rosalina**, **Pacita** and **Lagrimas**; nephews, nieces, grandchildren, relatives and friends

deeply mourn the demise of

REV. FR. JOSE PAREDES REMENTILLA

who died on May 2, 2003 at the age of 83.

He will be buried today (May 6, 2003) at the Imus Catholic Cemetery immediately after the 9:00 a.m. funeral Mass at Imus Cathedral.

The faithful are requested to pray for the repose of his soul.

"You will forever be in our hearts, Tatay"

Guillermo A. Soriano

of Langka, Meycauayan, Bulacan

Peacefully joined his Creator on May 5, 2003 at the age of 80.

His bereaved children **FELISA & ROMEO JUSTINIANI**, **RENATO & TERESITA SORIANO**, **MA. VICTORIA SORIANO**; grandchildren **ROMEO JR.**, **RYAN**, **RACHEL**, **JENNIFER**, **JASON** and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the family residence.

Interment will be on Thursday, May 8, 2003 at the Meycauayan Memorial Park after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

Napoleon del Mundo Aliño

Of Boac, Marinduque & Toronto, Canada
Peacefully joined his Creator on May 2, 2003 at the age of 85.

His bereaved wife **CATALINA** and children **DARREN** and **JIMMY**; his children with **DELIA LEAÑO ALIÑO** (†) who preceded him in death, **ROBERTO**, **ROSA RITA**, **EDUARDO**, **MICHAEL**, **MARINELA** and **ALMA**; children-in-law **JEAN**, **MARIA STELLA**, **MARIA LOURDES**, **CHARLES** and **AZMI**; grandchildren **JOHN PAUL**, **JING** and **RAY**, **TRACY** and **GEORGE**; **CARLO**, **PAOLO FRANCO** and **ANGELO**; **KATRINA** and **MARCO**; **CIARA**, **JEREMY** and **ASHLEY**; **BENEDICT** (†), **MIKEL** and **NIÑA**; great grandchild **ELIJAH**; relatives, friends and pious readers are requested to pray for his eternal happiness in Heaven.

His remains lie in state at Hope Chapel of Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be at 1:00 p.m. on May 7, 2003 at the La Funeraria Paz Crematory, Quezon City.

DEATH NOTICES

LORENZO S. TRINIDAD, SR.
Joined his Creator on May 1, 2003.

His body lies in state at Trinidad residence at Centro Norte, Alcala, Cagayan.

Interment will be on May 7, 2003.

EUGENIO R. PAGUIA
Joined his Creator on May 1, 2003.

His remains lie in state at Ipil Chapel, Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on May 7, 2003.

VIRGINIA CASUELA Vda de MONZON

of Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte

Peacefully joined our Lord on May 4, 2003 at the age of 67.

Her loving children **Mimi & Rollie Detabali**, **Girlie & Rico Ong**, **Dennis & Lynbel Monzon**, **Leandro & Cynthia Monzon**, together with grandchildren **Rambo**, **Rocky**, **Dorothy**, **Dexter**, **Sean**, **Piolo**, **Virgyll**, **Amber**, **Yan-Yan**, **Nikki**, **Charles**, **Nikko**, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe.

Interment will be on May 8, 2003 at Heritage Memorial Park, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:39

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INTERMENT NOTICE

Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
VICENTE VILLAMAYOR	May 7	1:00 PM	Holy Gardens Greenhills Memorial Park, Calamba City	Mojada In, Canlubang, Calamba City
AMELIA M. SAGUINSIN	May 6	9:00 AM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Angono, Rizal	Holy Gardens Memorial Park, Chapel A, Angono, Rizal
ROSALINDA S. BANIQUED	May 7	2:30 PM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Taytay, Rizal	B17 L13 Atlantic St. Exodus, Floodway, Taytay, Rizal

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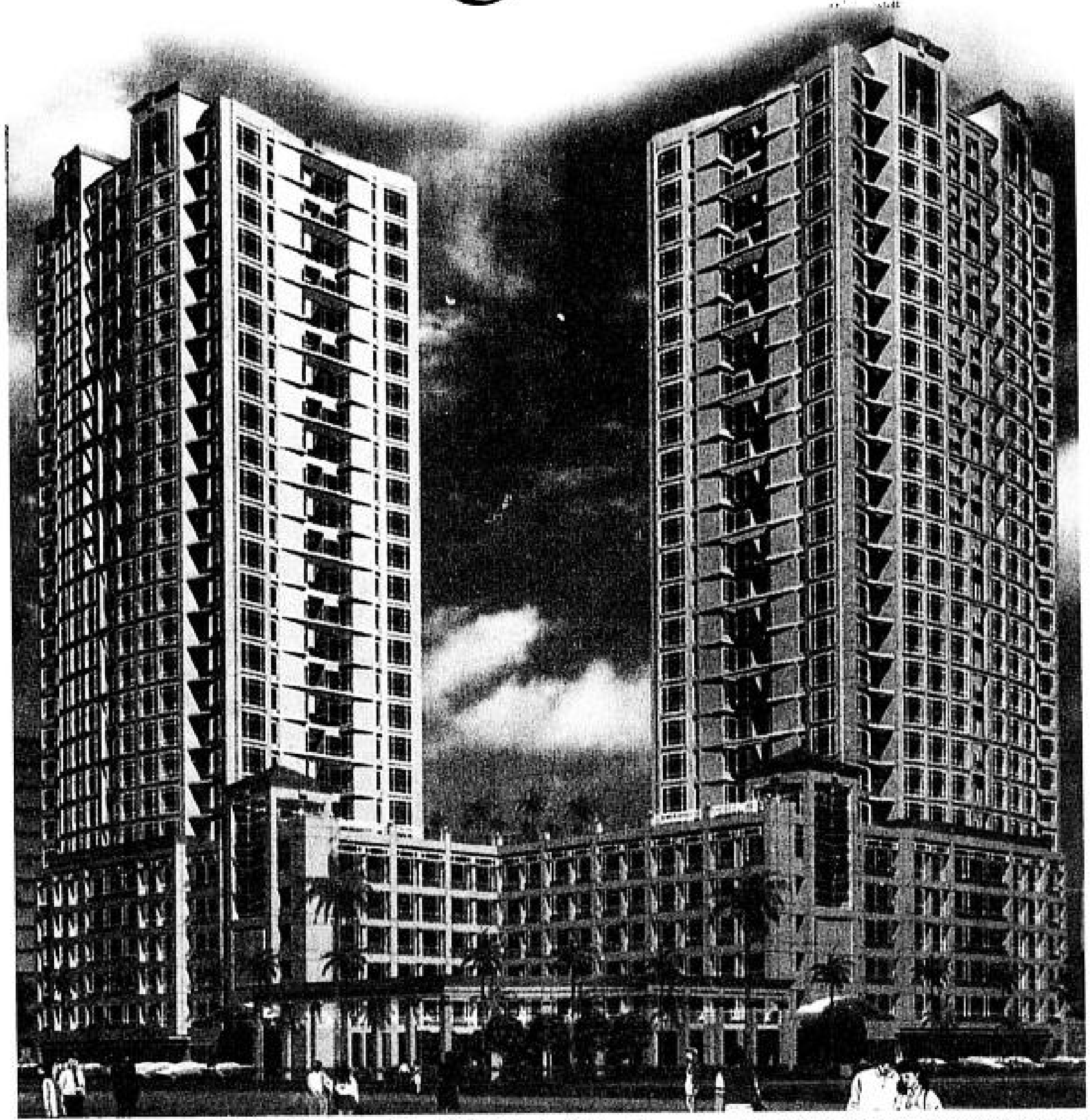
Makati condo girds for 2004 opening

By Charles E. Buban


THE TWO towers of Oriental Gardens: Orchid, left, facing Chino Roces Avenue and Lotus facing Export Avenue

BY NEXT year the two towers of Oriental Gardens Makati will be nearing completion and will be the most visible structure at the corner of Chino Roces and Export Avenues (beside Export Bank building on Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue).

With both towers rising 33 floors above ground, Oriental Garden's Orchid and Lotus Towers are poised to become the city's latest posh residential haven just a stone's throw away from Ayala avenue, Makati's busiest business district.

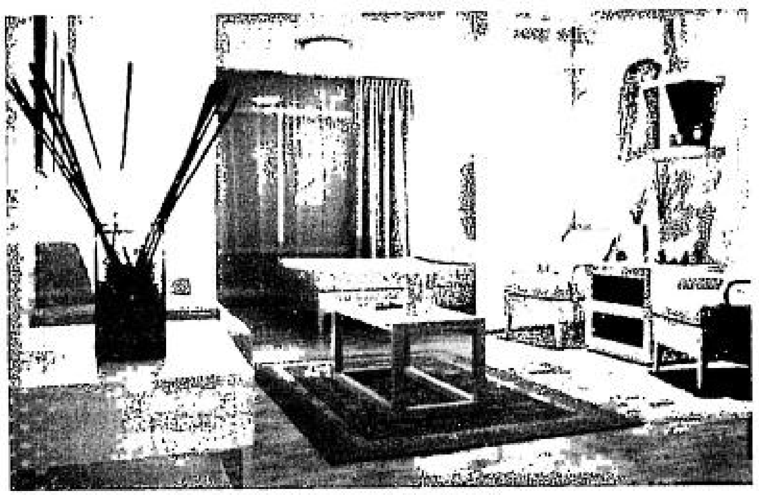
"Construction is ahead of schedule and by the end-quarter of 2004, it will be ready for occupancy," says Ramon Aldaba, first VP for sales and marketing of Federal Land Inc., owner, developer and property manager of Oriental Gardens.

Variety of units

Orchid and Lotus towers will feature a variety of studio, one- to three-bedroom units and penthouse suites, which are ideal for the up and coming young professionals and entrepreneurs looking for a trendy lifestyle, and within close proximity of their work or business.

"We are targeting people from Manila, Parañaque and even as far as Quezon City," Aldaba says.

Studio units cost between P2.2 million and P3.4 million; one-bedroom units, between P3.7 million and P4.2 million. Two-bedroom units are priced between P6.7 and P7 million; two-bedroom penthouse units, between P8.2 million and P8.4 million; and three-bedroom penthouse units, between P12.8 and P13.1 million.


A MODEL studio unit inside Oriental Gardens

Landscaped façade garden

Oriental Gardens features a landscaped garden situated between the two towers' façade and rises five floors above the ground.

But the real attraction lies further up where Orchid and Lotus towers separate.

This is where the recreational facilities will be located. It features a podium garden and koi pond, resort-style swimming pool, aerobics and gym, a clubhouse/multipurpose function room, outdoor children's playground, landscaped roof garden and a gallery for a coffee shop, variety of concessionaires and retail shops.

"These amenities are what makes condominium living ideal. It allows residents to do things they enjoy most but can't get right way if they live somewhere else," explains Aldaba.

A member of Metrobank Group, Federal Land has provided security to other notable and impressive high-profile business centers and secure, inviting residential structures such as the GT Tower at the corner of Sen. Gil Puyat and Ayala avenues, Bay Gardens and Bayview International Tower on Roxas Boulevard, PSBank Tower and Skyland Plaza also on Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue in Makati City and at Valencia Hills in San Juan.

A SAMPLE one-bedroom unit with the living and dining room shown

Expertise and experience converge at One Legazpi Park

WHILE it was a welcome honor, Ayala Land Inc. officials weren't exactly surprised when the ongoing construction of residential condominium One Legazpi Park was recently cited as being a "model of safety and quality" by Makati City officials who appeared on maverick MMDA commissioner Bayani Fernando's weekly television program "MMDA on the Road."

"From the start of One Legazpi Park's construction, we have stringently taken care to use only the best materials. Along with this effort is an unswerving commitment from Ayala Land and its building partners to make every project site the safest for the workers therein and the community that graciously hosts our development," says Angela Lacson, senior vice president of Ayala Land.

Collaborative effort

Set to rise 45 stories, One Legazpi Park on Legazpi and Rada streets marks a collaborative effort of expertise and experience. Project owner Ayala Land's Construction Management Group has an ISO 9002 certification for its "commitment to ensure the timely delivery of all its projects... with the highest possible construction standards and within the approved cost budgets."

Construction management consultancy firm Jose Aliling and Associates has an ISO 9000:2000 certification that attests to the company's tradition of ensuring "continuous improvement and customer satisfaction."

General contractor EEI Corp. also boasts of an ISO 9000:2000 certification to underscore its unwavering commitment not just to the quality of its construction projects, but to the safety of all those working therein. The company also makes a firm commitment to have "genuine concern" about the environment where its projects are situated.

Safety
FIRST
ONE Legazpi Park was named as EEI's safest project by its management committee.

'Safest project'

And even within EEI's already strict guidelines, One Legazpi Park's excellence still stands out. The contractor's management committee named it their "safest project" in January based on a set of strict guidelines on safety procedures, administration, education, equipment and health.

Currently being constructed ahead of schedule, One Legazpi Park will have an air-conditioned grand lobby, a social hall, swimming pool, daycare center with play area, and a fully equipped gym—along with other amenities and provisions standard in any Ayala Land development.

Legarda wants TCTs delivered within 2 months

SENATE Majority Leader Loren Legarda has urged the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board to compel all property developers to deliver the Transfer Certificates of Title (TCTs) of new housing units to their buyers within 60 days from full payment of the total contract price.

Apart from protecting new buyers from possible fraud and other irregularities, Legarda said, the move would also help improve national as well as local government tax collections.

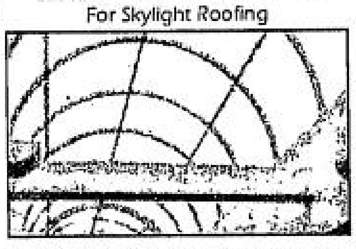
The sale of real property is subject to capital gains and documentary stamps taxes as well as applicable local government assessments. The taxes are for the seller's account but normally factored into the contract price paid by the buyer.

Proposal

Under Legarda's proposal, all developers and sellers of residential property—whether houses and lots, lots only, condominiums or townhouses—must deliver the TCT (or Condominium Certificate of Title, in case of condo units) to the buyer not later than two months from full payment of the contract price.

According to her, the HLURB should promptly revoke the licenses to sell of developers that fail to comply with the deadline.

Said Legarda: "Once a deadline is set for the delivery of TCTs under pain of sanctions, developers will be forced to quickly settle all taxes due, which is necessary before a new title could be processed. Thus, we will be assured of more efficient tax collections."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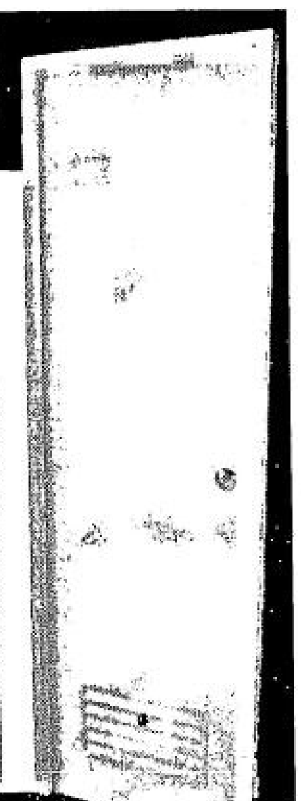
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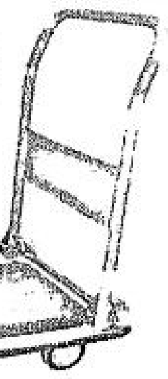

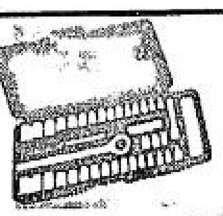
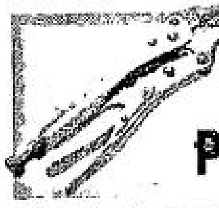
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The ABC of buying and selling real estate

By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D.

BUILDING DREAMS

BUYING and selling real estate may not be as easy as ABC but this short guide will help you have a smooth transaction. Whether you are transacting for an empty lot, a house and lot, a commercial building, a beachfront property, or any real property, it is important that you know and understand the terms that are used. The terms used in real estate transactions include:

(A)bstract of Title—The abstract is a summary of the history of the title of the property. If it were human beings, this would be the family tree. In the abstract of title, the conveyances, transfers, liens and encumbrances can be detected. This can be traced from the records of the Registry of Deeds and the Land Registration Authority.

(B)roker—Your real estate broker will assist you in the transaction to ensure that everything will be smooth. He/she will give you professional advice on the property values, documents, papers and condition of the property you are considering.

(C)aveat Emptor—This is a term that means "let the buyer beware." As the buyer of real estate, you take the risk without the protection of warranties. It is best to exercise due diligence when buying. If you do not understand the legal contract, ask a legal counsel. If you do not understand the plans and details of a house, consult a design or construction professional.

(D)eed of Sale—A document stating that the ownership of the property is being conveyed to you. You would need this document notarized and signed by the concerned parties in order that the ownership of the property can be transferred to you.

(E)ncumbrance—Anything that would affect the "fee simple" ownership of the title. This includes existing mortgages, easements, restrictions, claims or anything that has to do with the legal commitments of the property.

(F)ee Simple—Ownership of a real property without any limitations so that it can be sold, left at will or inherited.

(G)race Period—A short period, usually about 7 days after a payment obligation is due in which there is no penalty or additional interest.

(H)omeowners' Association—It is the association formed within a community to improve and maintain the quality, safety and livability of a subdivision. It imposes the rules and regulations and can even prevent you from constructing a structure that does not conform to the requirements of the community. Prior to obtaining a building permit, you have to get a clearance from the homeowners' association.

(I)mprovements—These are the buildings, houses, structures and utilities that have been added to the raw land. Aside from the tax declaration on the land, there is a separate tax declaration for the improvements.

(J)oint Ownership—A piece of property can have more than one owner so make sure that you get the consent of both parties when you buy.

(K)ickoff—A grand party of developers in which a product is launched to the media and to the market. Discounts are usually offered during this kickoff party.

(L)ease with Option to Purchase—This is an agreement that your lease payments will be credited to your payment when you buy the property. The terms and conditions of a lease-purchase agreement are written in a contract.

(M)arket Value—This is the price in which a willing seller will sell and a willing buyer will buy a property neither of which is under extraordinary pressure. When looking at the property for sale, try to compare the value of the one you are interested in with the value of other similar property.

(N)onexclusive Listing—A listing agreement with brokers in which the seller may use the services of other brokers. An exclusive listing, on the other hand, gives the authority to sell to only one broker.

(O)ption—A right that is given to the buyer to purchase a property under stipulated terms and conditions. Option money is required to hold a property.

(P)ower of Attorney—A legal instrument that authorizes a person to act as the representative of the person granting the power. This representative is called the "Attorney-in-Fact."

(Q)uitclaim—A deed used to remove any clouds or claims on the title by relinquishing any right, title or interest that the grantor may have.

(R)eplacement Cost Method—In trying to value the cost of producing or constructing the improvements on a piece of land, this method of appraisal is used. It gives an indication on how much the value of the improvement is.

(S)eller's Market—This is a time in the real estate cycle in which there can be more buyers than sellers. At this condition, sellers tend to have an upper hand in the negotiations especially on items such as price and terms.

(T)ransfer Certificate of Title—The official representation of ownership that is transferred when a property is sold. The title can be held in the name of one or more persons.

(U)nlawful Occupant—Beware of unlawful occupants in the property that you are buying. It is best to consult with your legal counsel for you cannot just eject unlawful occupants away from the property for they also have their rights. There are legal processes on how to eject unlawful occupants.

(V)endee—This is the term commonly used to describe the buyer. The seller in the agreement is called the vendor.

(W)aive—This is a legal term that means to forego or relinquish a right to enforce or require something.

(X)-Deal—In the payment of real estate, other properties may be exchanged so that there is literally an exchange of properties. Check the taxes that you have to pay before you exchange properties.

(Y)ield—Is the income that will be derived from an investment. This value is usually expressed as a percentage.

(Z)oning—Certain areas have zoning regulations and you better check if the structure that you want to build may not be allowed in the area that you are considering. For example, the construction of a commercial building may not be allowed in a residential neighborhood.

Buying and selling real estate can be a complicated matter. It is best that you consult with the real estate broker or the legal counsel of your choice.

(Alexis A. Acacio is an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of the Philippines. For comments and advice you may reach him at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.)

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WELCOME TO THE G… GROUNDBREAKING RITES
ROBINSONS LAND CORPORATION
ROBINSONS METRO CENTRAL
APRIL 23, 2003

LOWERING the time capsule is Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos, assisted by Robinsons Land EVP Frederick D. Go.

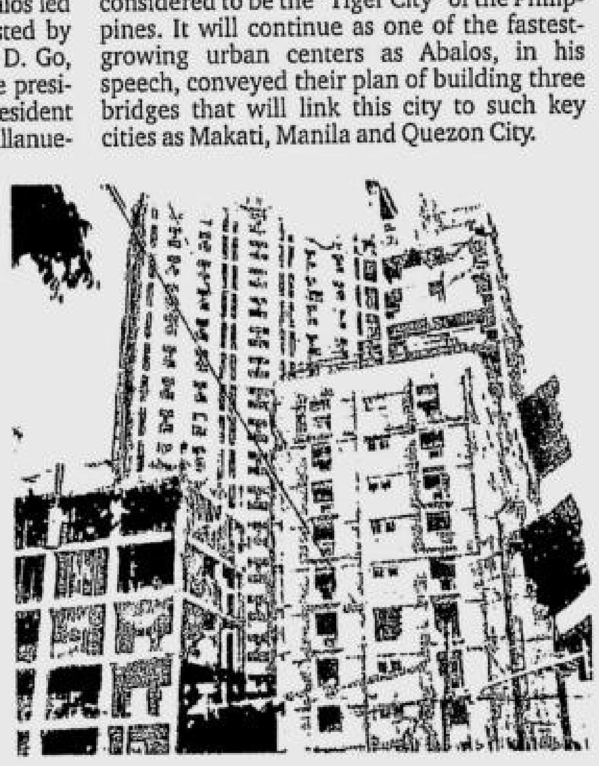
Robinsons Metro Central to rise on Pioneer Street

ROBINSONS Land Corp. recently held the groundbreaking ceremonies of its 16th shopping mall, Robinsons Metro Central. Located at the corner of Edsa and Pioneer Street, Robinsons Metro Central will be an exciting hub that will be offering a wide array of goods and services to its numerous patrons.

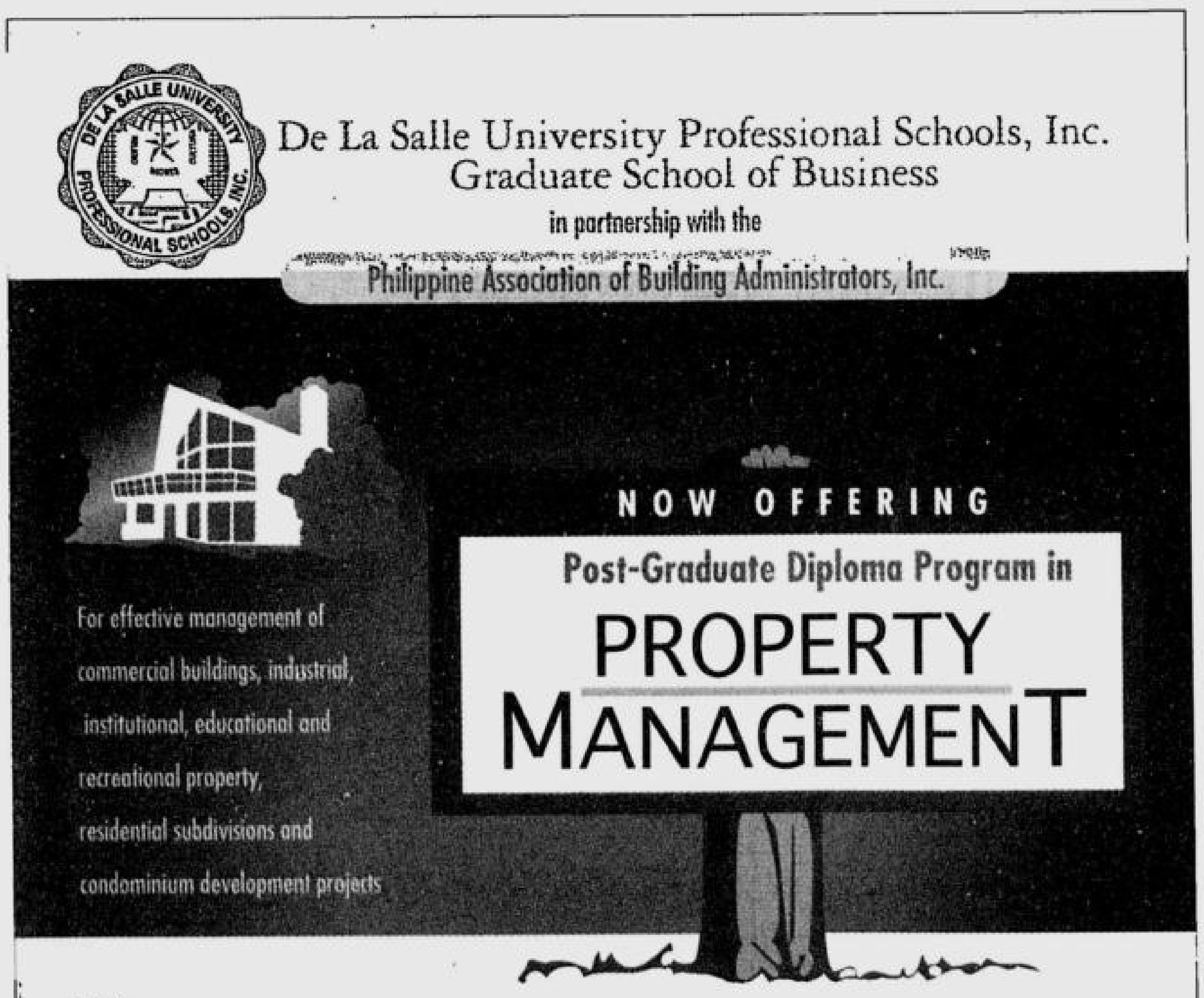
Upon its completion next year, this three-level commercial complex will house Big R Supercenter, Robinsons Department Store, Handyman Do-It-Best, Robinsons Movieworld, plus popular food-chain outlets, restaurants as well as new and unique retail formats.

Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos led the groundbreaking rites. He was assisted by RLC executive vice president Frederick D. Go, Robinsons Department Store senior vice president Robina Gokongwei-Pe, RLC vice president for corporate property planning Nicky Villanueva and VP for complex administration Tommy Lee O. Also present were RLC vice president for lease Minda V. Carpio, architect Jun Palafox of Palafox Associates, engineer Art Carlos of Constech Management Group Inc., and engineer Manny Mendoza of Monolith Construction and Development Corp.

This latest project strengthens RLC's commitment to provide world-class facilities and services that are responsive to the changing needs and wants of the market. Mandaluyong City is the premium choice for this newest addition to the Robinsons Malls chain as it is considered to be the "Tiger City" of the Philippines. It will continue as one of the fastest-growing urban centers as Abalos, in his speech, conveyed their plan of building three bridges that will link this city to such key cities as Makati, Manila and Quezon City.



ALMOST 50% COMPLETE Housing developer Empire East Land Holdings Inc. recently announced that development work on its four-tower The Xavier Hills in New Manila, Quezon City, is fast approaching the 50-percent completion mark. Towers 1 to 3 have been topped off at the ninth, 16th and 19th floors, respectively, while concrete pouring at Tower 4 is now at the seventh level. Slated for completion and turnover by the second quarter of 2004, The Xavier Hills features two-story, two-bedroom homes plus superior amenities.



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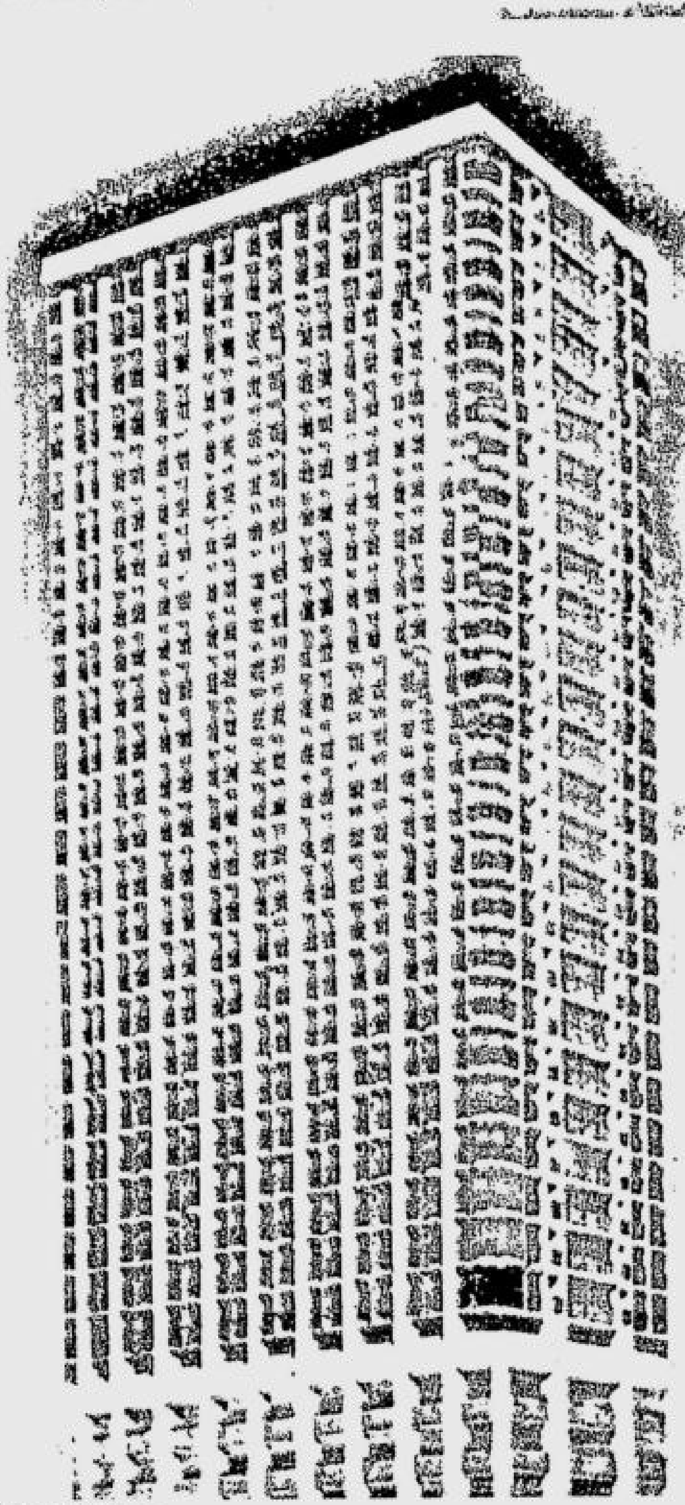
New residential, office condo gives better view of Manila



ESPAÑA Tower

By Charles E. Buban

THE VIEW of Manila is much better from up here. Standing on the balcony of one of España Tower's model units at the 33rd floor, one gets an unobstructed view of the city's skyline and surrounding environs.

Rising 33 floors above ground, España Tower is the most visible residential cum office condominium building on España Boulevard (near Welcome Rotunda) with only the nearby tower of PLDT as the closest challenger.

"Up here, one gets a 360-degree view of Metro Manila. Even the air up here is cool and somewhat fresh—it's just spectacular," said Lyn Maceda, executive vice president of FF Land Corp., the marketing firm of the property owned and developed by FF Cruz and Co. Inc.

FF Land last month announced the availability of its remaining residential and commercial/office units at the España Tower.

"This is a great opportunity for buyers out there to be part of this unique property," Maceda added.

Attracting distinct buyers

España Tower's location dictates the type of buyers it is attracting at the moment.

According to Maceda, parents of medical and nursing students studying in nearby universities and colleges comprise the most number of inquiries.

"Understandably these parents want some place that would provide their children a safe place to rest and also a quiet corner to study or review," described Maceda.

Prices of studio units start at P800,000; one-bedroom units at P1.2 million; two-bedroom units at P2.5 million; and three-bedroom units at P3 million.

Special units at the penthouse are also open for sale on a first-come, first-served basis.

Financing through banks or Philamlife's fixed rate housing loan program are also available.

Complete facilities

España Tower provides its student-residents the closest ambience to their home plus more.

On the 15th floor, España Tower offers swimming pool, function rooms, gym and commercial units such as a café and convenience store.

The building provides pre-wired house cable for telephone facilities, two elevators for residential units and another two for office units, an automatic fire detection alarm and sprinkler system, intercom system or visitor monitor, emergency generator and cable channels.

Top company

FF Land, which specializes in real estate, is the newest arm of the country's leading engineering firm FF Cruz & Co. Inc.

"This is the company's first venture in real estate and hopefully España Tower will pave the way for more similar property developments for FF Cruz," said Maceda.

Consistently ranked among the country's top 10 construction firms (in terms of revenues) and top 400 companies, FF Cruz is a rated "AAA" contractor by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board.

"This is one reason our clients can be sure we only used the best material and construction engineering in building España Tower," said Maceda.

Starting from its foundation, the property sits on a natural rock formation that ensures the building's stability.

Built on solid foundation

The building was constructed in such a way that it enhances air current convection, ventilation and natural light. The result: a breathable building interior that even without air-conditioning system, people inside can still feel comfortable.

Even parking is amply provided, thanks to nine levels exclusively built for this purpose

"Each unit to be turned over will have a parquet flooring, toilet of prefabricated bath (module), kitchen with flooring and granite countertop, Italian tiles, bathroom and toilets with interior vertical ventilation shafts plus an operable ventanilla," Maceda enumerated.

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EASTWOOD PARKVIEW TOWER 2

When staking a claim to entire city matters

PREMIER urban property developer Megaworld Corp. has launched the second tower of the Eastwood Parkview twin-tower luxury residential condominium project in Eastwood City, after sales reached the 90 percent mark for the first tower, launched in September last year.

For discriminating homebuyers, Eastwood Parkview represents a unique opportunity to own not only a deluxe condominium but also a stake in Eastwood City as a whole, bustling urban complex that combines condominium homes with offices, restaurants and bars and trendy shops in a well-connected "live-work-shop-play" setting.

Dream lifestyle

"Eastwood Parkview embodies a dream lifestyle right at the core of Metro Manila—a lifestyle that gives Eastwood Parkview homeowners the exclusive privilege of calling the entire Eastwood City an extension of their homes," said John Natividad, vice president for marketing of Eastwood Property Holdings Inc., Megaworld's marketing arm for the project.

Said Natividad: "The brisk demand for units at Eastwood Parkview's first tower despite a difficult global economic scenario is proof that the market has been responding quite well to our vision. This has given us the confidence to introduce Tower II without delay."

Eastwood Parkview's advantage over the other residential towers in Eastwood City is that it overlooks an expansive, 2.8-hectare central park. The park, set in Eastwood's central parking area, consists of a garden promenade, water features, picnic grounds and an array of restaurants, bars and retail shops surrounding a lagoon.

Like Tower 1, the second tower offers executive studio and one- to three-bedroom homes designed for starting families, newlyweds and bachelors. The two glass-curtained towers, both 40 stories high, are joined together by a four-story podium.

At the top of the podium is a tropical-style pool deck with a swimming pool and a lounge, along with covered lanais, landscaped playgrounds and gardens, a multipurpose room, gym, sauna and changing rooms with shower.

Just a walk away

Eastwood Parkview is just a walk away from strategic points in Eastwood City. These include a fast-growing IT community led by Citibank, IBM, Trend Micro and eTelecare at the Eastwood City CyberPark, the country's premier information technology park, as well as a clutch of high-tech offices and well-known IT learning centers at the International Center for Information Technology Education.

Also a stone's throw away is a dining and entertainment section called Eastwood City Walk, a well-frequented destination that boasts an eclectic mix of restaurants, bars and cafés. An expansion phase called City Walk 2, expected to be completed by the third quarter this year, promises to enhance the City Walk experience with a digital cinema complex, a bowling and billiards center and a new set of dining and retail outlets.

For shoppers, the newly opened Fashion Square and The Home and Lifestyle Center offer the latest trends in personal fashion and home furnishings.

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Helpful hints you need to know before buying your dream house

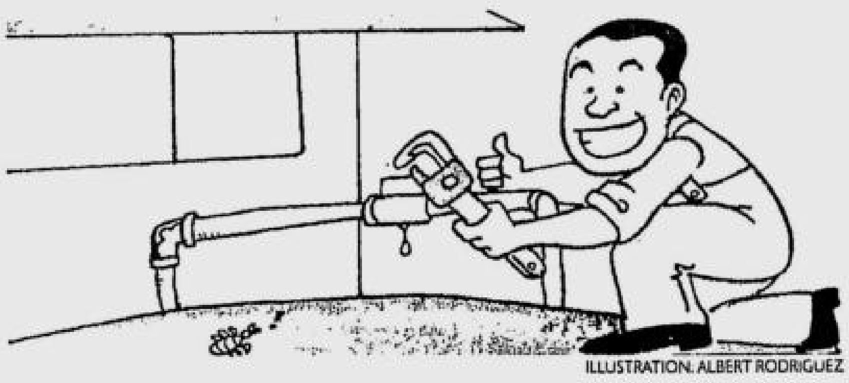


ILLUSTRATION. ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

THE EXCITEMENT brought about by buying a new house can overwhelm any homeowner. Quite strongly that they tend to overlook certain essential elements like protection from termite infestations. Only after they actually discover the damage do they realize how important pest control is. They will call in the termite experts (pest control operators) only when the structure is already vulnerable to irreversible damage.

As such, homeowners should see to it that their houses are built on "good ground," which is pretreated with termiticides prior to construction. Soil treatment starts as soon as the excavation of the footings of the posts and walls is completed. The sides and bottom of the excavation as well as the entire floor area should be treated to create a continuous chemical barrier to block potential routes of termite entry. This should be the standard procedure before building a structure.

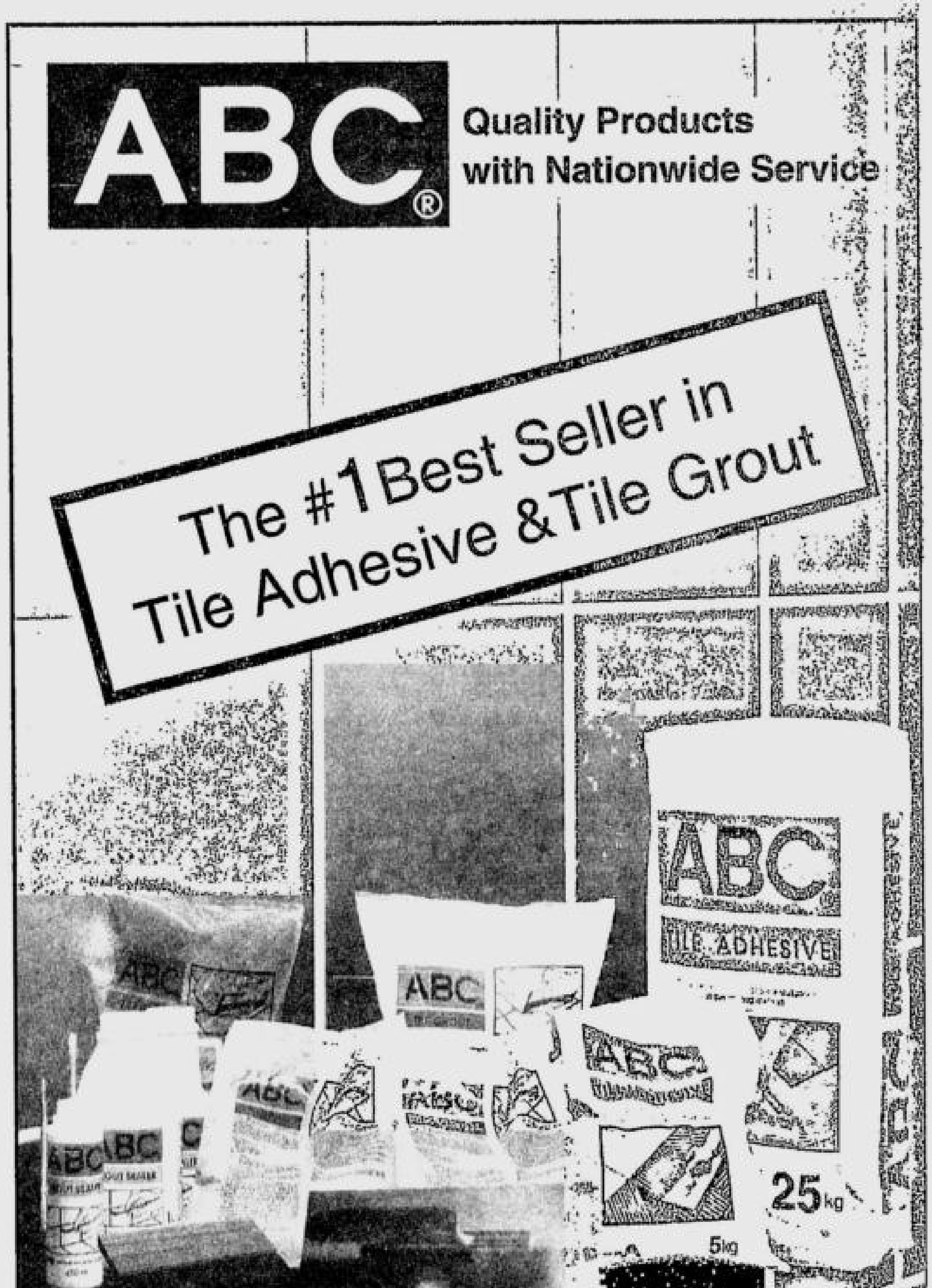
Dursban Premium Termiticide Concentrate from Dow AgroSciences is the brand you can trust to provide efficient preconstruction treatment. Dow AgroSciences is dubbed an industry leader in pest control, specifically for termite protection. Customers get the best deal from Dursban because it offers absolute termite extermination, is environment-friendly, has low odor, and most of all, it is affordable for medium- to low-budget homes.

While offering round-the-clock protection, homeowners don't have to worry about leaching and migration. Dursban binds in the soil where it is applied and has a long residual action that would protect your home for a long time.

Dursban's active ingredient is lethal to termites but it is not harmful to people and house pets provided procedures indicated in the label are properly followed.

Here are more tips to ensure your house can stand on "good ground" prior to construction:

- Eliminate wood contact with the ground. Many termite infestations result from structural wood being in direct contact with the soil. Earth-to-wood contact provides termites with simultaneous access to food, moisture and shelter, as well as direct, hidden entry into the structure.
- Posts or stairs that are embedded in concrete are also vulnerable to termites since they usually extend all the way through the concrete to the soil. Contrary to popular belief, wood which has been pressure-treated, is not immune to termite attack; termites will enter pressure-treated wood through cut ends and cracks, and will also build tunnels over the surface.
- Don't allow moisture to accumulate near the foundation. Termites are attracted to moisture and are more likely to enter a structure if the soil next to the foundation is consistently moist. Water should be diverted away from the foundation with properly functioning gutters and splashblocks.
- Leaking faucets, water pipes and air-conditioning units should be repaired, and the ground next to the foundation should be sloped so that surface water drains away from the building. Lawn sprinklers and irrigation systems should be adjusted to minimize water puddling near the foundation.
- Never store firewood, lumber or other wood debris against the foundation or inside the crawl space. These materials attract termites and provide a source of food. When stacked against the foundation they offer a hidden path of entry into the structure and allow termites to bypass any termiticide soil barrier which is present.
- Vines, trellises and other dense plant material touching the house should also be avoided. Dead stumps and tree roots around and beneath the building should be removed (where practical), along with old form boards and grade stakes left in the place after the building was constructed.
- Have the structure treated by a professional pest control firm. although the measures earlier mentioned will help make the house less attractive to termites, the best way to prevent infestation is to treat the soil around and beneath the building with a termiticide.



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Philippines and UK: Strengthening ties

British Embassy
Manila

Philippines – United Kingdom trade relations

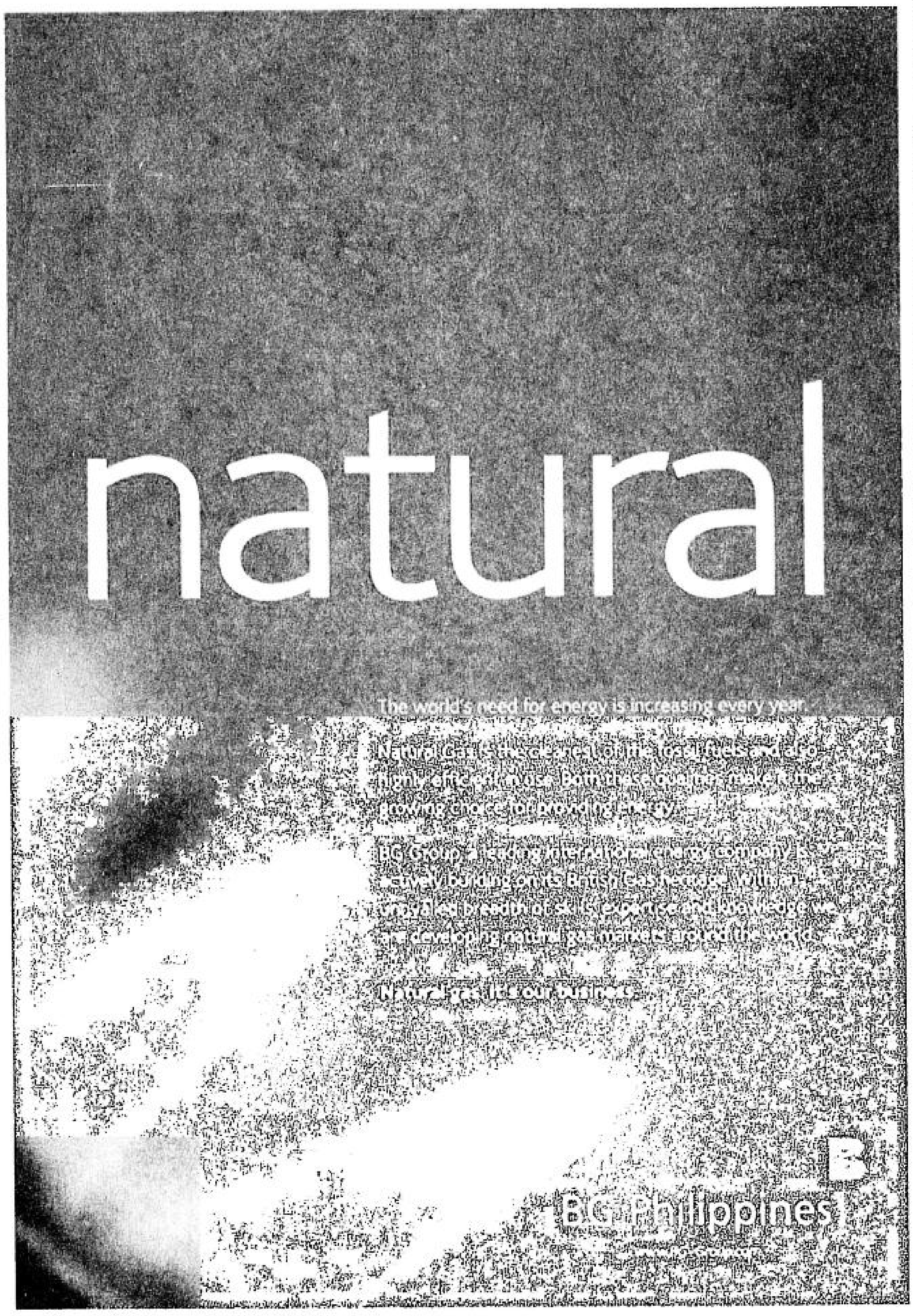
TRADE relations between the Philippines and the UK remains very healthy as shown by the year-on-year figures of British exports to the Philippines as of January 2003, amounting to 25.8 millions pounds compared to the 29.8 million pounds in the same period in 2002, despite a 13 percent decline for the year this is still higher than the figures recorded in 1999, 14 million pounds and 2001, 21.5 million pounds. A trade deficit is still in favor of the Philippines in spite of the decline by 41.7 percent following a decline in UK imports. British investment are in the energy sector, telecommunications, retail, pharmaceutical and transportation.

Several trade missions visited the country in the past year where British businessmen were given the opportunity to meet with local businessmen and government officials as well. For the second time, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry returned to Manila in late 2002, for a one-week trade mission, Bernadette Hartigan, manager of the World International Project, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) led the group. The mission members are senior businessmen representing UK-based companies specifically; Bellis & Morcom Ltd., BSI Technology Ltd., Chris Perkins, Diplomatic Mission Supplies, East West Enterprises, Genric Ltd., Global Insulation Logistics Ltd., Halcrow Group Ltd., J.J. Genetics, Lubron Advanced Oils Ltd., Nectar, Oxylitre Ltd., Oxylitre (Medical Services) Ltd., Protec Fire Detection Plc, REW Ritchie Seed Potatoes, Samuel Hogarth & Sons, Spaflow (Utilities) Ltd. and Vita (Europe) Ltd. Mission members met with their Filipino counterparts to further trade and investment between the two countries in the areas of manufacturing, Eco-tourism/adventure travel, consultancy, medical personal care and agriculture sectors. They called on the Board of Investments, meet with officials of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Makati Business Club, Asian Development Bank and the British Chamber of Commerce – Philippines. British Embassy First Secretary for Trade and Investment, Eamonn Staunton said, "The London Chamber has been very keen on exploring investment opportunities in the Philippines for the last 6 years and by 2003 more companies are expected to visit the country. And despite the perceived problems on peace and order, the mission members feel that it is generally safe traveling within the country. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) of the UK released a 'balanced' travel advisory for their nationals in comparison with other Embassies in the Philippines.

The Suffolk Chamber of Commerce also returned on March 17 to 21 for a 5-day trade mission to Manila and Cebu supported by the British Embassy, Manila and Trade Partners UK – the British Government's trade promotion body. The mission was composed by: Stewart Wales Somerville Limited, manufacturers of high performance surface coatings for new building projects and refurbishment works. Responsible Cultural Experiences Limited, providing placement and training for individuals into adventure, conservation and community projects to benefit local communities. Retail Marketing International Limited developers of branding for companies for new products. Traffic Safety Systems Limited manufacturers of hand-held radar and laser speed-detecting equipment and other road-traffic-related products. Wicksteed Engineering Limited, the UK's largest manufacturer of tube expanding, pulling and cleaning equipment used in the manufacture of heat exchangers, condensers and boilers. Bradman-Lake Limited, a worldwide supplier of both top-load and end-load cartooning systems. Interlink Exports, exporters of electrical goods, test equipment and audio communications systems.

The British Embassy in Manila brought together, for the first time, British companies and organizations that have made their mark in the "Queen City of the South" in banking and finance, insurance, travel food and beverage, beauty and fashion, education and the arts. All roads led to the Ayala Center in Cebu, where all things British were showcased in an exhibit participated in by: HSBC, Standard Chartered Bank, PruLife UK, Body Shop, Marks and Spencer; Unilever Philippines, British Airways, Trade Partners UK and the British Council. This exhibit gave the Cebuanos the opportunity to be aware of their corporate history, new and innovative products, community and environmental concerns, investment opportunities and cultural programs. Gov. Tomas and Margot Osmena graced the opening ceremonies as the guests of honor. They were joined by Eamonn Staunton, First Secretary, Commercial representing the British Embassy and Geoffrey Short, Chair, represented the British Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines. Other noted guests represented the local government, businessmen from Cebu and Manila and the media.

The Joint Environmental Markets Unit (JEMU) of the UK led a trade mission to the Philippines on March 3 to 5. JEMU is an agency of the UK Departments of Trade and Industry (DTI) and of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The British Embassy's Trade and Investment Section gave them a country briefing before they met with key officials from the Departments of Environment and Energy, Asian Development Bank, Metro Manila Development Authority and local government officials of Munoz City, Nueva Ecija. Composed of six British companies: RSM Robson Rhodes, HLC Environmental Projects, RRI, Organics Ltd., Bronzeoak Ltd and Waste to Energy, the mission members shared the United Kingdom's experience to the pressing environmental problems of the country, the highlight of the visit is a "UK Seminar on Waste and Energy: Integrated Solutions to Converging Problems" at the Hotel Inter-Continental Manila. HM Ambassador Paul Dimond formally opened the seminar and was joined by Philippine and British government and private sector officials: Undersecretary Demetrio Ignacio of the DENR to discuss the Philippine Environment Sector; Douglas Barnes, Deputy Director of JEMU will speak on Environmental Solutions from the UK; Barry Holmes, Trade Promoter of the UK's DTI will share the UK Sustainable Energy Program; Albert Maglalang, Executive Director of the National Solid Waste Management Commission will talk on the Philippine Solid Waste Management Program; Undersecretary Cyril del Callar of the DoE speaking on the Philippine Clean Energy Program and Vicente Laza, SVP of LGU Guarantee Corporation on Financing Environmental Infrastructure while representatives of the mission members also shared their expertise in environmental concerns.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ON THE GREAT occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's birthday and accession to the throne, I wish to express my warmest greetings and paramount admiration as we fortify our ties with the United Kingdom.

Over the years, we have worked hand in hand with the British government and with the business sector in intensifying our bilateral trade and investment activities. We have continued to nurture a relationship of harmony in expanding the different industries where both nations are active partners. Relations between the Philippines and the United Kingdom have been marked in the last decade by a keener British interest in economic and political development in the country. This is well demonstrated by a sharp rise in development assistance the number and frequency of high-level visits to Manila and the significant increase in the volume of trade and capital flows.

As we etch this momentous occasion in history, I call on the nation to celebrate this sustained friendship and to cultivate this promise of renewed vitality. I am equally grateful for and delighted with developmental efforts that were made to encourage political and economic cooperation, financial sector collaboration and joint undertakings in agriculture, environment, poverty reduction, cultural relations, tourism, maritime matters, consular affairs, defense, legal, regional and multilateral affairs. This only shows how international partnerships could be imperative and indispensable in the lives of both nations. Let us therefore continue to fulfill and sustain our renewed hopes that would nourish RP-UK relations in the different areas of our relations.

This is also a time of thanksgiving for all the blessings shared by the Philippines and the United Kingdom since the establishment of our relations in 1946. For 57 years, we have witnessed the evolution of a rich partnership, which we hope to build up further in the many years to come. It is in this light that I wish to convey my felicitations to Her Majesty. There could be no greater gift that to return to Queen's warmth and benevolence as we grow in a time when global collaboration is vital to all of us.

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

THIS YEAR we are celebrating the Birthday of Her Majesty the Queen in the 51st year since Her Majesty's accession to the throne.

As Her Majesty's representative at Manila, I am delighted to note the very strong relationship between the Philippines and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in all fields, including trade and investment, education, the arts, exchange of professional skills and governance. British investment recent years has built a significant stake for us in the Philippine market. We continue to see a healthy flow of short-term trade and portfolio investment.

Early this year, the British Council at Manila showcased some of the best that the UK can offer to our friends in the Philippines through a fortnight of activities entitled "basta UK, iba". Over two weeks, Filipinos saw how the marriage of young Philippine design talent and British education gelled to produce a theatrical fashion extravaganza. A film festival showed the best of our film industry, screening "Bend it like Beckham" on the opening night. A partnership with one of the country's leading hotel chains gave birth to a British Food festival, giving the opportunity to sample something of our cuisine beyond the traditional fish and chips. We awarded scholarships to gifted Filipinos who will study in the UK in 2003/4 as part of the British Government's Chevening Scholarship Scheme.

Over the past year we have valued the strength of our partnership with the Philippine Government, with NGOs, academics and agencies with whom we have been working on issues such as conflict prevention and peace-building, counter-terrorism, development, human rights and inter-faith dialogue.

The Filipinos and the British remain great friends, and our commitment to your country is for the long term. On the occasion of the celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday, I pay tribute to the dedication of the Filipinos who contribute their skills in our country and to the thousands who support the British presence here in all fields. I extend to my British compatriots in the Philippines my tribute to their commitment to our bilateral partnership.

My team at the British Embassy in Manila wishes all of you a joyful celebration and a productive year ahead in all your professions.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Paul Dimond
Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Manila

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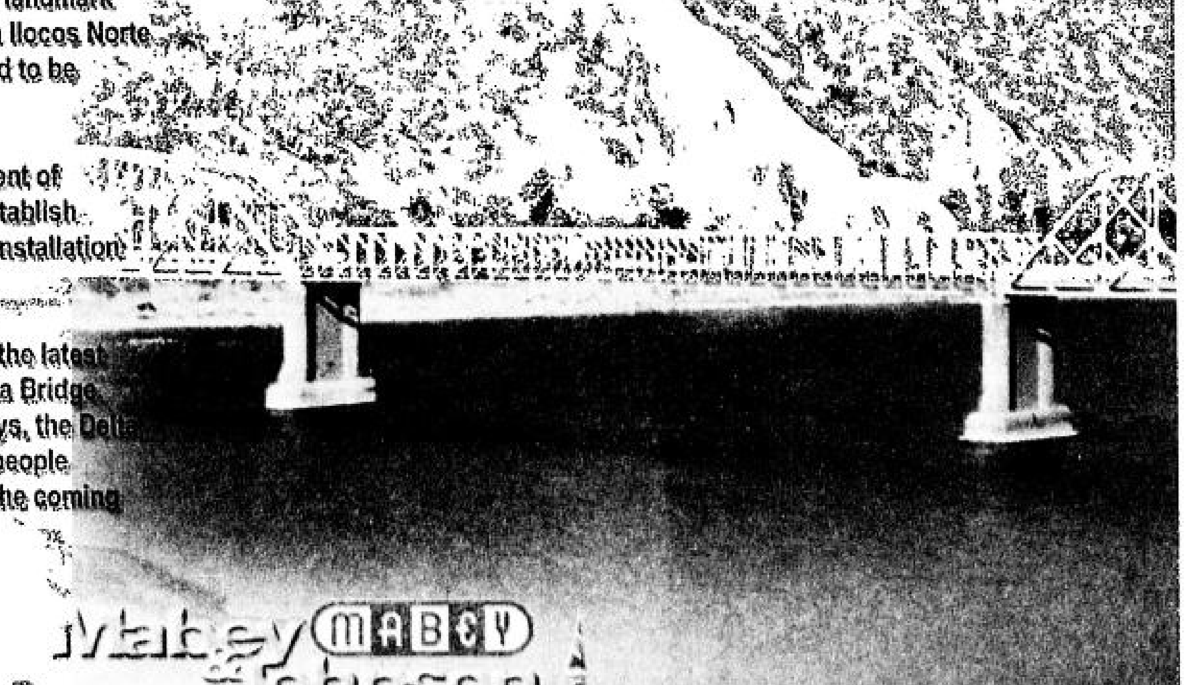

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Fitness LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Exercise can either strengthen or weaken you

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

HAVING been told by health authorities that prevention and a strong immune system are the best defense we have against SARS, people are taking to heart the advice to exercise regularly, get enough sleep, and eat healthy food. A friend who was not eating fruits before because she was following the Atkins Diet said she's now eating two servings a day because she's scared of SARS. Another friend whom I have been trying to convince to exercise sent me a text saying, "You win! I am now starting my anti-SARS workout." If this is the effect that fear of SARS has on people, then something good may come out of this bad situation the world is currently in.

How exercise may strengthen immune system

While the field of exercise immunology is still young, researchers like David Neiman are finding evidence that moderate exercise strengthens the immune system.

In one of his experiments, Neiman found that overweight, sedentary women who walked briskly for 45 minutes five times a week had a 50 percent reduction in the duration of respiratory symptoms compared to those who remained sedentary. In other words, when they would have colds, the fitter women recovered faster.

In a study by Charles Matthews of the University of South Carolina, people who engaged in regular physical activity that included exercise, sports and chores like heavy gardening or scrubbing floors, had 25 percent fewer colds than people who were less active. This does not conclusively prove that being physically active prevents colds, but Matthews says, "The most likely explanation for the finding is that higher levels of activity for the average person derive some benefits to their immune defenses against a cold."

At this point, scientists are still not sure exactly how exercise can enhance the immune system response. One theory is that since exercise increases circulation, immune system cells get around the body faster. Neiman and other scientists have found an increase in various types of immune cells like natural killer cells after an exercise session. The boost lasts for a couple of hours.

Second, all the hard breathing you do during exercise rids lungs of different types of airborne viruses and bacteria. Third, the increase in body temperature can inhibit the growth of certain bacteria, making your body more effective at fighting off impending infections.

The last theory is that exercise makes your immune response stronger by relieving stress and anxiety. Stress is known to have a negative effect on the immune system. Scientists at Arizona State University found alpha brain waves in exercisers during and after a 30-minute run similar to people in a meditative and relaxed state. So if yoga or tai chi don't interest you, don't worry. These esoteric forms of exercise are not the only ones that can relieve stress.

Too much of a good thing

But exercise is a double-edged sword. Moderate to vigorous exercise may help you catch fewer colds and flu but extreme exercise may do the exact opposite. Several studies have shown that prolonged endurance exercise like marathon running and long distance cycling can temporarily suppress the immune system and increase the risk of viral and bacterial infections, specifically upper respiratory tract infections.

Neiman believes this may be caused by an increase in stress hormones like cortisol that are released during and after a bout of heavy exertion. Neiman calls the three to 72 hours of decreased immunity following prolonged heavy exercise "an open window" of vulnerability. His studies reveal that immune cells concentrate on repairing muscle damage during this period, leaving the rest of the body temporarily vulnerable to attack.

Neiman studied runners of the 1987 Los Angeles Marathon and found that those who completed the race were six times more likely to come down with a cold compared to those who dropped out of the race. In a 1989 study of the same marathon, 13 percent of the runners came down with the flu two weeks after the event but only 2 percent of those who trained for the marathon but did not run in the race became sick. It seems that prolonged exhaustive exercise has the most negative effect on the immune system. Neiman himself gave up running marathons (he has completed 58 marathons) because his own research convinced him it was not a healthy thing to do. Five to 21-km "fun runs" are not a problem for the immune system, according to research. It's the longer events like 32- and 56-km that can raise the risk for participants.

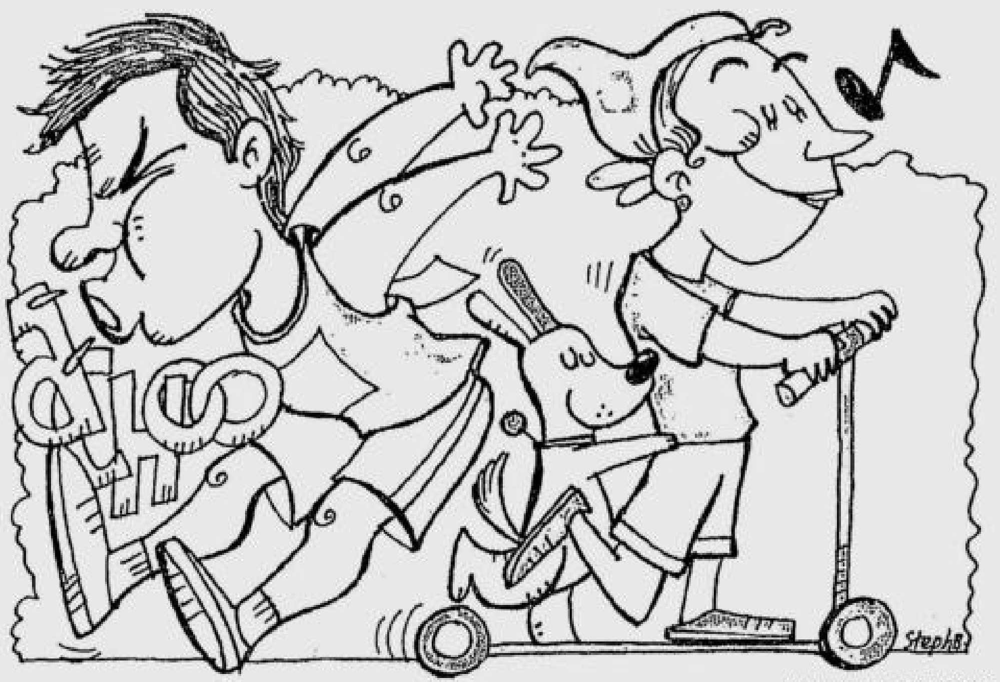

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Moderate to vigorous exercise may help you catch fewer colds and flu but extreme exercise may do the exact opposite

What is moderate exercise?

The terms "moderate exercise" and "extreme" can mean different things to different people. An hour of exercise a day may be

EXERCISE/ C2

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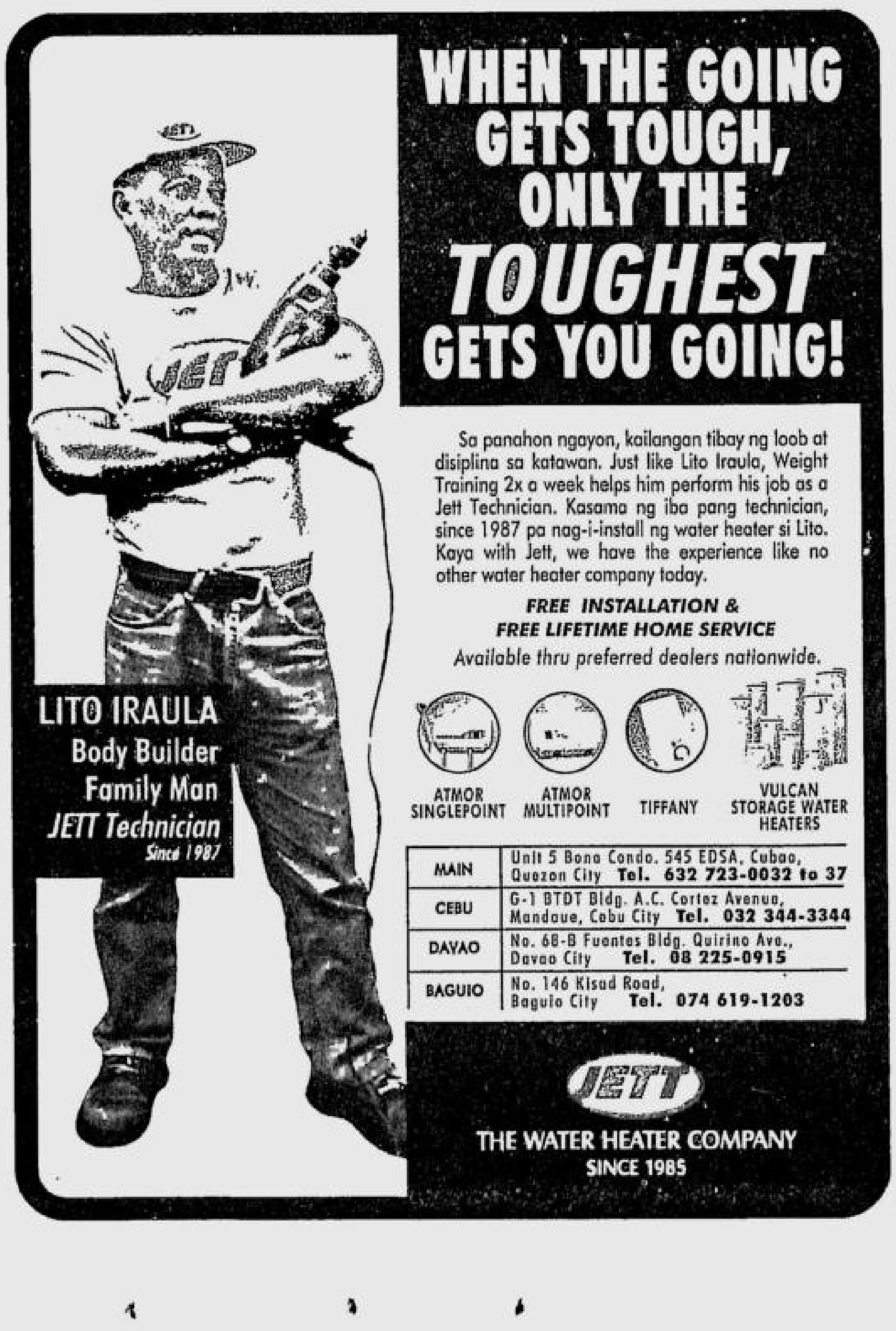
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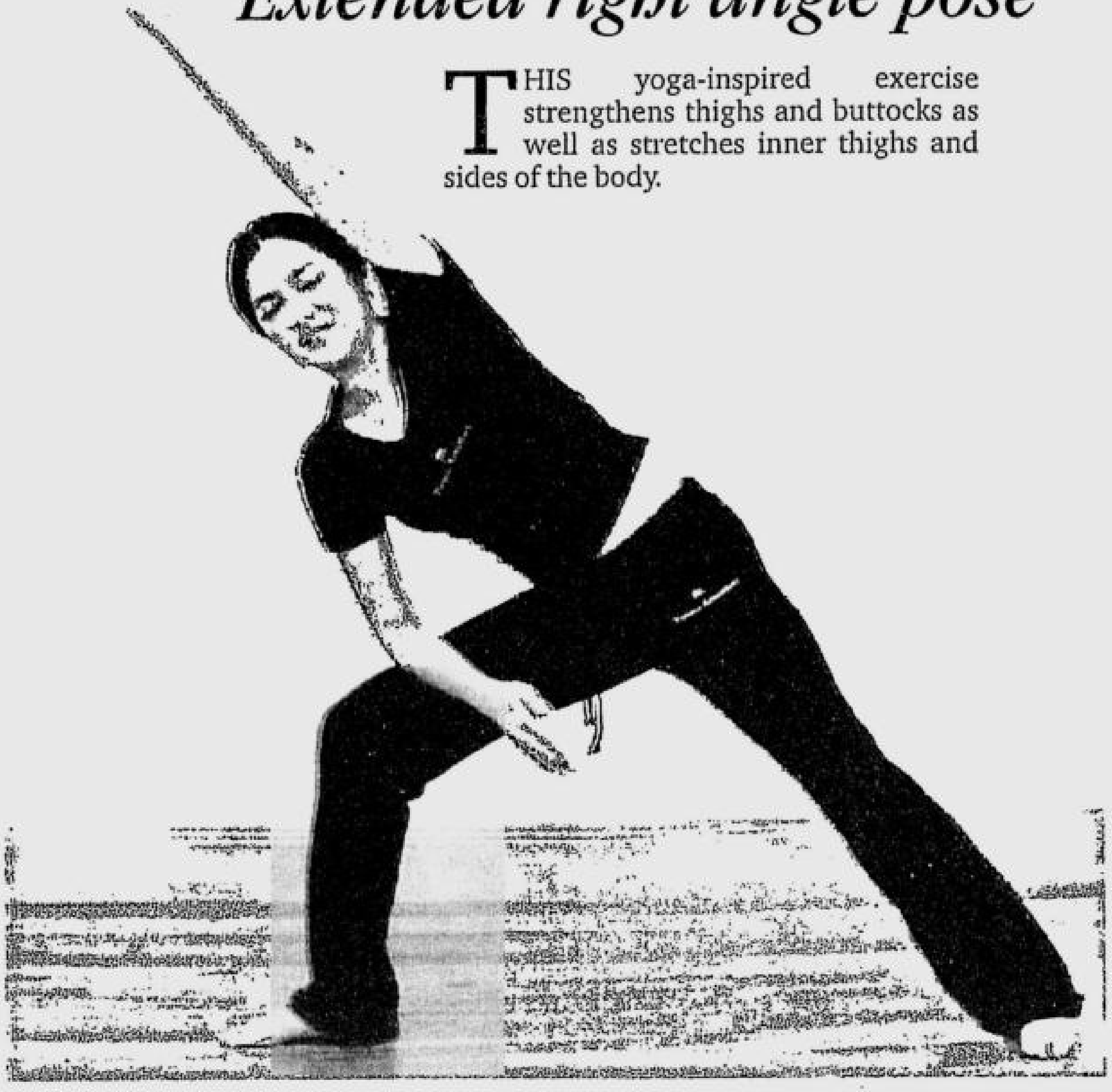
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Extended right angle pose

THIS yoga-inspired exercise strengthens thighs and buttocks as well as stretches inner thighs and sides of the body.



Equipment:
None

Exercise technique:

1. Stand with your legs as wide as you can. Look down and check that the toes of one foot are in line with the other.
2. Turn your left leg toward the side of the room. Look down and check that the heel of your left foot is in line with the arch of your right foot.
3. Lift your right heel and turn your right foot in slightly.
4. Bend your left leg. Make sure that your knee is right over your ankle and does not go past your toes.
5. Bring your arms to shoulder level. Make sure to keep your shoulders relaxed and lightly pressed down.
6. Bend sideways and place your left elbow on your knee as you bring your right arm up and close to your ear with the palm down.
7. Hold the pose for five breaths.
8. Slowly return to starting position and repeat on the other side.

Performance tips:

1. Consciously focus on your breathing and relaxing during the exercise.
2. If you can, bend lower by sliding your hand down your leg until you reach the floor in front of you. You can also hold your ankle or calf.
3. If it's comfortable for your neck, turn to look up at the ceiling.
4. Try to keep your top shoulder from turning inward. Try and rotate it backward to keep your chest open.
5. Halfway through the exercise, try to move your legs a little wider for more of a challenge. You will usually find that if you make a conscious effort to relax, you can stretch a bit more than you normally can.
6. When switching to the other side, be sure to go through all the alignment instructions again.

Repetitions:
Do the exercise once on each side. One breath is equal to a slow inhalation and exhalation.

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

To keep our employees abreast with current health issues and regularly update them with tips on preventive healthcare, we are planning to run a series of "Health" seminars. In line with this project, can MEDICard assist us by providing some of our needed resource speakers?

Yes, we can. In fact, part of our Preventive Healthcare Program is focused in keeping our members well informed about current health issues, illnesses, good health habits, diets and even family planning. Your requests for resource speakers must be done through your servicing officer at least one month in advance.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Pediatrics is the chosen field of expertise of **Dr. Hilda Elisa V. Teodoro.** This University of Santo Tomas Medicine graduate boasts of more than 23 years of clinical training and experience. Doc Hilda, as she has become to be commonly addressed has been an accredited MEDICard medical service provider since 1995. She is married to accountant Eduardo Rabago with whom she has two children. Members may drop by her clinic at the Makati Medical Center, Room G-12 for their consultation needs. Clinic hours are from Mondays to Fridays, 11 AM to 1 PM, then from 2 to 7 PM, and on Saturdays from 1 to 5 in the afternoon.

MEDICard accredited specialist based in the World Citi Medical Center is **Dr. Roy M. Salcedo.** "Doc Roy" specializes in Internal Medicine. He is a graduate of the West Visayas State University and earned his specialization training as an Internist at the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center. He is affiliated with the Philippine Medical Association, a Fellow of the Philippine Academy of Medical Specialists and an Associate of the Philippine College of Physicians. He is also a part-time radio host and is a Medical Consultant for MERALCO. Members may visit him for consultations at Room 202, Mondays to Saturdays, from 3 to 7 PM.

Rehabilitation Medicine is the chosen field of specialization of **Dr. Carmela Jay K. Acacio**, our accredited specialist at Central Luzon Doctors Hospital. Doc Carmela finished her degree in Medicine at UERM-MMC and took the residency training for her specialization at the Philippine Orthopedic Center. Dr. Acacio is affiliated with the Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine, Philippine Medical Association and the Quezon City Medical Society. Members may visit her clinic in Central Luzon Doctors Hospital, Hospital Drive, San Vicente. Tarlac City, Fridays and Saturdays, from 8 AM to 5 PM.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

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TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. Log on to www.medicardphils.com.

MEDICard is the first and only HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asian region to be ISO 9002 certified.

ISO 9002

Exercise can either strengthen or weaken you

From page C1

moderate to a group exercise (aerobics) instructor used to teaching two to three classes daily while it may seem extreme to a couch potato who runs out of breath after climbing two flights of stairs.

While there are no hard and fast rules, Neiman says that 30-90 minutes a day of aerobic exercise is considered moderate. For the average exerciser, Neiman recommends limiting aerobic exercise sessions to not more than 90 minutes per session because he discovered that after a three-hour run, cortisol levels stay high the whole day.

A lot has to do also with other factors like sleep, diet and psychological stress levels. It's possible for people to exercise for more than 90 minutes on a regular basis and not experience any health problems, while an hour a day may be too much for someone who is on a crash diet, smokes, and is not getting enough sleep.

Symptoms of too much exercise

The classic symptoms of "overtraining" or too much exercise are both physical and psychological. Physical symptoms include chronic fatigue, persistent muscle soreness, loss of appetite, unexplained weight loss, headaches, a feeling of "heavy legs," insomnia, gastrointestinal disturbances, menstrual irregularities, and frequent colds and flu.

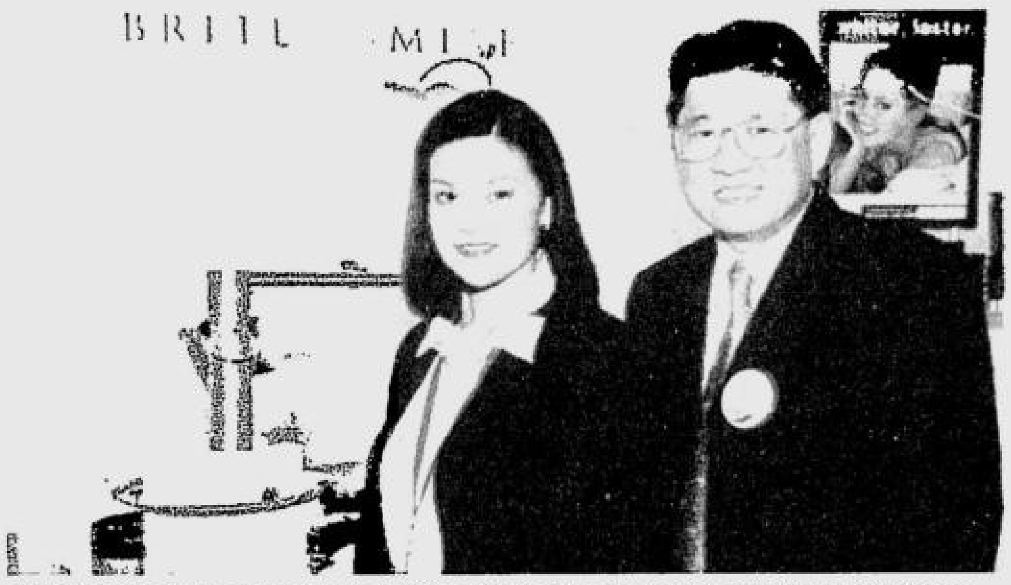
Psychological symptoms are depression, mood changes, apathy, lethargy, low motivation, lack of concentration, anxiety, irritability/excitability, boredom, inability to relax, and anger/aggressiveness.

If you exercise a few hours a day but you don't have any of these symptoms and you are eating well and getting enough sleep, then you don't need to worry that you are getting too much exercise.

Next week: Immune system protection tips for athletes and heavy exercisers.

The Association will hold a series of certifications for fitness instructors on May 8-11 on the following topics: Stability Ball, Core Board, Yoga, and Pilates. All certifications will be conducted by ACE 2002 Instructor of the Year Lawrence Biscontini. Call Ivy Abuel at 813-6077 or text 0917-518-1202 or 0917-481-7063.

For past articles and exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com.



DR. SHERYL Villareal, BriteSmile dentist, and Kee Peng Leow, the company's Asia-Pacific vice president

White teeth in just an hour

A STATE-OF-THE-ART technology from the United States called BriteSmile Professional Teeth-Whitening is now available locally.

Developed by Dr. John Warner, a former Nasa scientist, the technology uses a combination of proprietary gentle whitening gel and "cool blue" light shone directly onto the gel-covered teeth. The chemistry of the gel and light creates a whitening effect to erase stubborn tooth stains, including the very resistant tetracycline stain.

According to BriteSmile dentist Maria Sheryl Jose Villareal, the BriteSmile procedure is clinically proven to whiten teeth by an average of eight shades, and even more for individuals with darker teeth. The treatment lasts for only an hour, plus dental consultation and preparation time, and delivers results that can last for up to three years.

"By comparison with other conventional treatments, you would have to wear the messy, uncomfortable and unpleasant-tasting do-it-yourself home bleaching trays overnight for one to three weeks to get some noticeable results," says Villareal, who holds a postgraduate degree in prosthodontic-implants from New York University.

BriteSmile's proprietary 15-percent hydrogen peroxide gel and cool blue light react to cause a powerful whitening effect that removes years of stubborn stains built up over time caused by coffee, tea, red wine, cola, cigarettes and other lifestyle factors.

"Most importantly, independent clinical research has concluded that BriteSmile is effective and safe, it does not soften tooth enamel and is not corrosive," says Villareal.

The BriteSmile dentist oversees every aspect of the whitening procedure. The dentist assesses the patient's teeth and gums first before administering the BriteSmile treatment. Patients with preexisting dental conditions, such as carious lesions, broken or lost restorations, periodontal disease or extensive calculus, need to address these problems before undergoing the BriteSmile procedure.

Painless process

"The days of relying on short-acting whitening toothpaste, wearing take-home bleaching trays night after night and undergoing painful laser treatments are over," says BriteSmile International Asia-Pacific vice president Kee Peng Leow.

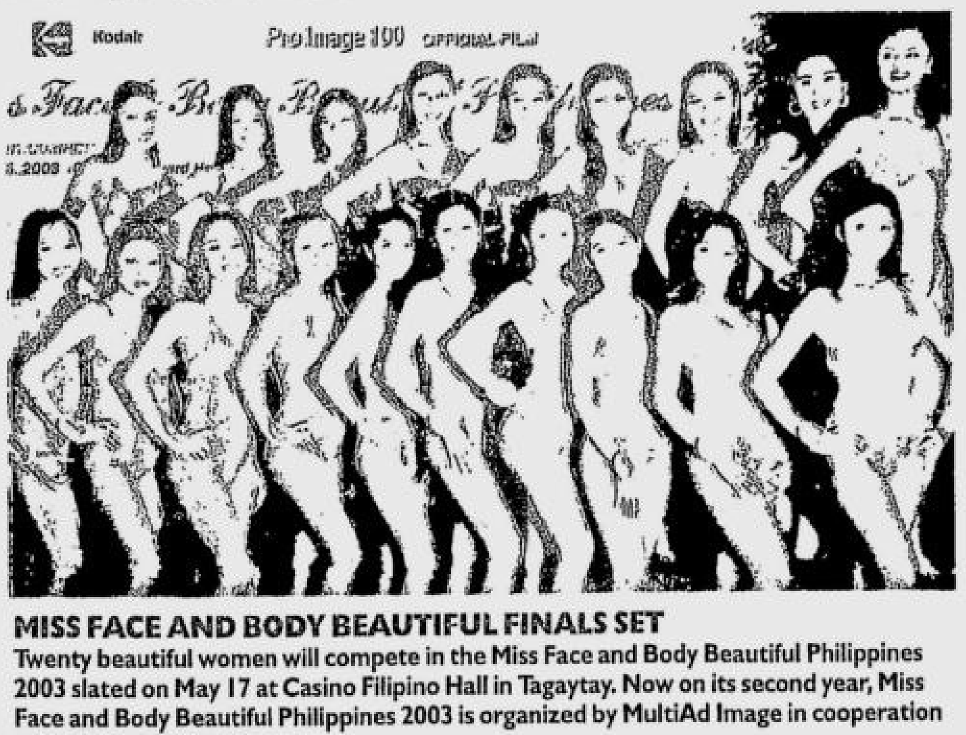
BriteSmile results in whiter teeth in one hour with just one visit. It delivers instant and satisfactory results with minimal sensitivity to the teeth. It is perfect for people who want to regain the smile they had as a youngster, or for those needing a confidence boost for that all important job interview."

BriteSmile is proud to announce that the prestigious Journal of the American Dental Association published a study corroborating the safety and efficacy of the BriteSmile procedure in its February 2003 issue. Moreover, the study noted that the BriteSmile treatment may also aid in the improvement of gum health.

Headquartered in the United States, specifically Walnut Creek, California, BriteSmile started its operations in 1999 and is traded on the Nasdaq stock exchange under the symbol "BSML." The company has whitened the teeth of more than 500,000 patients worldwide and continues to enjoy rapid growth In the US and Europe.

BriteSmile has recently introduced a full line of whitening products, including a whitening toothpaste, mouthwash and take-home maintenance kit to assist patients in maintaining their white smiles and their overall dental health.

In the Philippines, Body Visuals is the exclusive distributor of BriteSmile and makes it available in over 20 dental clinics in Metro Manila. Treatment costs between P18,000 to P25,000. Log on to www.britesmile.com. For a list of accredited dentists, call 715-7057 or 716-3631.



MISS FACE AND BODY BEAUTIFUL FINALS SET
Twenty beautiful women will compete in the Miss Face and Body Beautiful Philippines 2003 slated on May 17 at Casino Filipino Hall in Tagaytay. Now on its second year, Miss Face and Body Beautiful Philippines 2003 is organized by MultiAd Image in cooperation with Casino Filipino Tagaytay.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Did Jesus and Mary Magdalene have a romantic relationship?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

FELLOW PDI columnist Isagani A. Cruz, in his April 27 column, wondered what relationship Mary Magdalene had with Jesus Christ. With great insight, he speculated that this relationship could not have been merely spiritual or platonic. "Could there have been a personal and physical attraction between them not unlike the sensual feelings of a man and a woman for each other," asked the former justice of the Supreme Court.

The answer, Mr. Cruz, is a resounding "Yes!" The two had a romantic relationship! In fact, there is documentary proof showing that Jesus Christ was kissing Mary Magdalene in public and the disciples got jealous of her. Mr. Cruz should not be embarrassed or ashamed to think the two were lovers because it happened to be true.

The evidence is contained in the Gospel of Philip, one of the Secret Gospels of Jesus Christ discovered in Nag Hammadi, Upper Egypt, in 1945, earlier than the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Qumran Caves.

Here is the relevant passage of the Gospel of Philip according to the Nag Hammadi texts:

"...the companion of the [Savior is] Mary Magdalene. [But Christ loved] her more than [all] the disciples, and used to kiss her [often] on her [mouth]. The rest of [the disciples were offended]... They said to him, 'Why do you love her more than all of us?' The Savior answered and said to them, 'Why do I not love you like her? When a blind man and one who sees are both together in darkness, they are no different from one another. When light comes, then he who sees will see the light, and he who is blind will remain in darkness.'"

It is very clear from the above unedited and uncensored quotation from the Nag Hammadi texts that there was indeed a romantic and physical relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus Christ. Before the discovery of these secret gospels, such a relationship was mere speculation. Now we can consider it a fact.

Truly human

And I see nothing wrong with that. I do not know why some religious leaders try to hide that fact or get embarrassed discussing this aspect of Jesus' life. He was also, after all, truly human like us. He said so himself even in the edited canonical gospels approved by the Church.

And the fact that they were romantically linked together, that Mary Magdalene was the girlfriend of Jesus, explains why Jesus first appeared to her rather than to any of the disciples after His resurrection; why Magdalene anointed Jesus' feet with a very expensive oil and He did not stop her from doing so; and why she was always present in all important events in Jesus' life, including at the Crucifixion.

One religious researcher said that it was common during that time for a single male teacher or rabbi to have a female companion. Nothing unusual or anomalous about that. Of the three Marys who were the companions of Jesus, he showed special preference for Mary Magdalene. It seems to have been an accepted practice at that time. No one ever showed any embarrassment over it, except that some disciples got a bit jealous of her as the gospel of Philip indicates.

Reliability of Nag Hammadi

How authoritative or reliable are the gospels found in Nag Hammadi? Since they do not belong to the canonical gospels approved by the Catholic Church, they will likely be subjected to vicious attacks from orthodox and conservative Church officials. But it will be difficult to deny documentary evidence.

The Nag Hammadi library contains secret Gnostic gospels of Jesus, which were later considered heretical by the Church. Gnosticism was an influential philosophy embraced even by some of Jesus' disciples during the early years of the Christian religion until it was declared a heresy. Maybe that's why these gospels were hidden for so long.

Discovered in December 1945 by an Arab peasant, the 13 codices of the Nag Hammadi texts written on papyrus were first sold on the black market through antiquities dealers in Cairo until they attracted the attention of the Egyptian government.

Word of the outstanding discovery of these secret gospels soon reached Prof. Gilles Quispel, distinguished historian of religion at Utrecht in the Netherlands. Tracing out the first line, Quispel was startled to read: "These are the secret words the living Jesus spoke, and which the twin, Judas Thomas, wrote down."

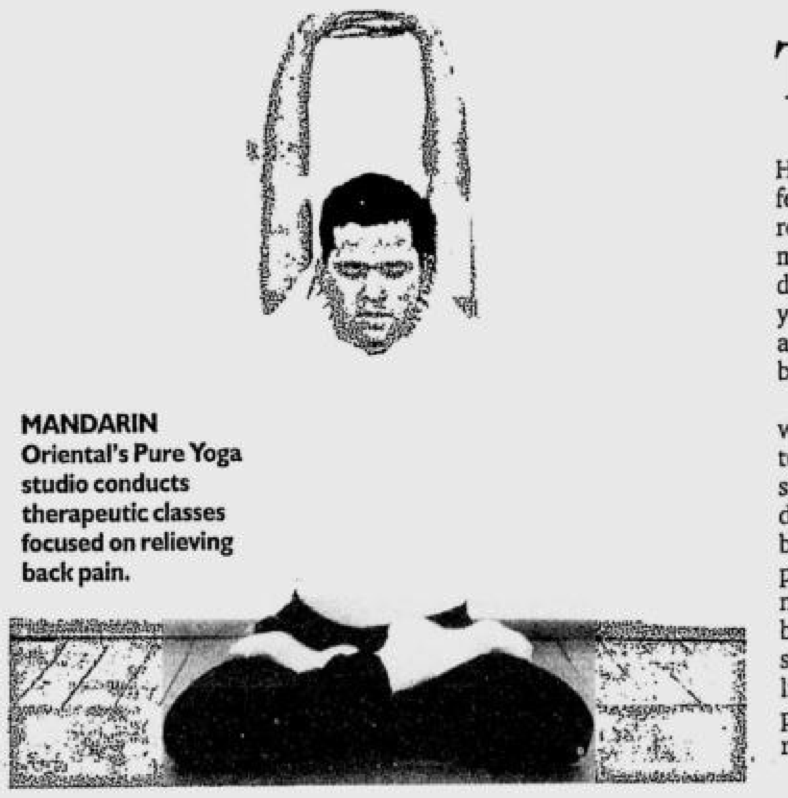
"Unlike the gospels of the New Testament," according to Elaine Pagels in her book Gnostic Gospels, "this text identified itself as a secret gospel. It contained many sayings known from the New Testament; but these sayings, placed in unfamiliar contexts, suggested other dimensions of meaning. Other passages differed entirely from any known Christian tradition. The living Jesus, for example, speaks in sayings as cryptic and compelling as Zen koans."

She gave the following example: Jesus said, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."

I suggest that Mr. Cruz read the book "The Nag Hammadi Library" edited by James M. Robinson, published by Harper, San Francisco, 1978, 1979, if he wants to know what the contemporaries of Jesus wrote about him, which the Church did not have a chance to edit or censor. The truth shall set him free.

> Evidence of their relationship is contained in one of the Secret Gospels of Jesus discovered in Upper Egypt

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City; tel. 810-7245 or 892-6806, or e-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://j.licauco.tripod.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.



MANDARIN Oriental's Pure Yoga studio conducts therapeutic classes focused on relieving back pain.

Therapeutic yoga classes focus on back pain

HEEDING popular clamor for effective treatment and immediate relief against a very common ailment, Prakash Singh Bisht, Mandarin Oriental Manila's resident yoga instructor, will conduct therapeutic yoga classes focused on back pain starting May 13.

"Apart from being a philosophy which promotes balance and integrity between mind, body, and spirit, yoga is also a relaxation discipline that has been found to be very effective in curing and preventing back pain. Acquiring a mastery of yoga's postures and breathing techniques enhances strength and flexibility and relieves tension, the major cause of pain," shares Prakash, who has recently concluded a beginner's meditation program at Pure Yoga.

Pure Yoga's therapeutic classes for back pain comprise six sessions and run from May 13-25. There will be a morning class from 9-10 a.m. and an evening class from 8:30-9:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and another evening class from 8:30-9:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. A minimum of three students will be admitted in each class. Deadline for registration is on May 12.

Prakash says that today's modern, fast-paced lifestyle has also brought more stress to minds and bodies, resulting in a variety of ailments that have put a dent on human wellness and productivity. Back pain seems to be suffered by most, striking people of various age groups, with those from ages 45-64 being the hardest hit. Although its most common form is hardly a life threatening ailment, back pain compromises an individual's capacity to live a full life by cutting down his social activities, reducing his effectiveness at work, and even straining personal relations because back ache causes irritability.

Back pain can be attributed to several causes such as incorrect sitting position while driving or performing desk-bound tasks, lack of exercise, or even heavy weight lifting, if not done properly. What is most insidious about back pain, especially if the victim does not seek immediate redress through therapy, is that it induces pain as well on the neck and limbs. Through time-tested yogic techniques, back pain can be cured, or better yet, avoided before it sets in and compromises an individual's lifestyle.

Apart from those who are already suffering from severe or chronic back pain, Pure Yoga's therapeutic classes are especially recommended for people whose lifestyles are sedentary for the most part. Company executives who are perennially desk-bound while exercising their functions fall into this category. People who frequently drive for long periods will also benefit from these classes.

Call 750-8888 local 2101.

DLSU corporate wellness program slated May 9

THE DE La Salle University Professional Schools Inc. Graduate School of Business (DLSU PSI-GSB) integrates Corporate Wellness in its MBA program this school year to promote the importance of a healthy workforce in businesses and corporations. Classes for the Corporate Wellness Program, which runs for three weekends, start on May 9.

The three-unit course is relatively new in the Philippines, and DLSU PSI-GSB recognizes the need to arm its students with the basic knowledge and skills to develop within the workplace an effective physical fitness and health program for their respective workers and staff.

Serving as lecturers for the Corporate Wellness Program are noted health and fitness guru Vivian Zapanta, nutritionist Prof. Leonora Panlasigui and Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Jose Raul Canlas.

"This course is specifically designed for corporate heads, managers and even CEOs so they can see the value of physical wellness in a corporate setting," says Zapanta, who holds an MA in Physical Education from the Centro Escolar University. "In fact, there is a Presidential Decree stating it's a must to provide physical fitness among employees."

Zapanta has likewise developed physical training programs for various multinational companies.

"This course on Corporate Wellness actually involves all faculties of man. It's mainly the physical because it's the most obvious," Zapanta relates. "Then there's spiritual, not religious but spiritual wellbeing. These components then equate to a holistic approach to wellness."

She also stresses that Corporate Wellness management should not actually be expensive. "You can be creative in utilizing what is readily available to your employees, such as encouraging them to walk. A healthy workforce can actually help companies save a lot on health insurance expenses."

Alongside physical wellbeing, the course will also delve on the importance of a healthy, balanced diet, which Prof. Leonora Panlasigui shall tackle in her lecture. A member of the faculty of the Department of Food Science and Nutrition in UP Diliman, Prof. Panlasigui holds a mater's degree in Nutrition from Iowa State University, USA and a doctorate degree in Nutrition Sciences from the University of Toronto, Canada.

"It is likewise important for corporate heads and manager to let their staff know what they take," says the nutrition consultant. "Especially with the proliferation of fastfood chains, it is equally significant to know that the quantity of food intake should go hand-in-hand with the nutritional value of foods."

Innovative approach

Providing this relevant subject matter to MBA students is indeed an innovative approach to honing future business and corporate managers. As noted Sports Medicine practitioner Dr. Jose Raul Canlas puts it, "A healthy workforce makes for a more productive company."

Dr. Canlas himself is an advocate of an active lifestyle, having served as team physician of the Philippine Delegation to various international sporting events, most recent of which is the 27th Olympic Games in Sydney, where he was appointed head of the medical team. He also had fellowship training in Sports Medicine and Orthopedic Surgery at Minneapolis Sports Medicine Center in the US.

"We also hope that through the Corporate Wellness course, employers and employees will also be able to extend the wellness program benefits to their respective families," states Dr. Canlas. "The wellness course will include, among others, exercise science, healthy lifestyle lectures, weight management and group fitness."

DLSU PSI-GSB is ranked among the top 25 MBA schools in the Asia-Pacific region. It offers a wide range of MBA programs, coupled with the latest research facilities and faculty members who have trained here and abroad. Call 524-4611 local 258 or 753-4616, or e-mail GSB-Colloquia@dlsu.edu.ph.

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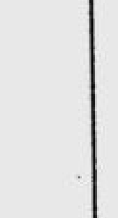

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LIFESTYLE

Take a break and live better, longer

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Physical ailments are psychosomatic reactions to problems of living

ANNIE, a highly ambitious fitness instructor and gym owner, dashed out of her office after a three-hour teaching class, entered her car and read the documents needed for her next business meeting. While stranded in traffic along Edsa, her heart raced and her pulse quickened. She began to gasp for air. Her stomach fluttered and she soon experienced cold sweats. "Stop the car!" she told her chauffeur. Burying her head between her knees, she soon felt better. It was a typical panic attack. And it could have been avoided if only she knew how to take a break.

High wire act

People are continuously learning how to manage their lives, balancing as they go along. We live in a world full of tension, and the high price we pay is the toll on our health—physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Roy W. Menninger, president of the Menninger Foundation, believes the physical ailments of 80 percent of patients—colds, upset stomach, back pains, loss of appetite, insomnia and fatigue—are not so much physical as they are psychosomatic reactions to problems of living. This plus the apparent trend of serious illness brought about by emotional anxiety.

Act now

How does one know when it's time to do something about stressful living? When…

- You easily lose you temper. It doesn't take much to put you on the warpath.
- Little, insignificant problems become big, unbearable situations for you.
- Your eating regimen is erratic. Maybe you eat dessert as your main course. Or, you take beer instead of orange juice for breakfast.
- Fatigue, even before the day ends, sets in.
- Suddenly you have significant hair loss or you seem to have aged overnight. Or you start experiencing nervous ticks (like biting your nails, pulling your hair, clenching your teeth).
- You are drinking more coffee, alcohol and sugar than you should or you are popping too many sleeping pills and smoking too much.
- Seized by an overwhelming urge to run away, there isn't anything else you would like to do than to detach from the world, leave your troubles behind and travel to a far place.

If you manifest any two of these symptoms, then it's time to learn how to relax.

Where to begin

Explore the possibility of a lifestyle change. Bad habits can lead to sickness (i.e. if you are fond of fatty foods, try to cut back on *crispy pata* or *bulalo*, eat less of that cream puff, put less sugar in your coffee, drink fewer alcoholic beverages). In short, take those baby steps toward good health by thinking "small" sins instead of "big."

Know what's good for you. Add fresh fruits, fresh/organic vegetables, sweet potatoes, low-fat yoghurt, fatty fish like tuna, salmon, mackerel, sardines, extra virgin olive oil to your diet.

Call Mara Pardo de Tavera for organic food fair schedules, tel. 853-1772; Tuna To Go—Rosabelle Fuentes, tel. 426-9635; 853-1772, with branches in Makati, Cainta and Quezon City. Tuna Delicioso tuna snack items, Berna Tiangco at 575-6012.

Cook with less oil and salt. It's better for your heart. Call AMC for the latest technology in no-oil cookware with a lifetime warranty (tels. 722-2318; 721-2621).

Take up mind-body therapies. For yoga, call Rakendra-Ravi and Rashmi Singh, tel. 890-7960. Most gyms offer qi-gong and tai-chi.

Body balance is a new therapy combining yoga and tai-chi. Call Fitness First, tel. 771-0828; 813-0761. Meditation and stress control techniques can calm the mind. Call Inner Mind, tel. 810-7245.

Make aromatherapy a part of your life. Essential oils from herbs, flowers and plants can heal both body and spirit. Do not use candles as they can be dangerous (fire hazards and lead emissions). Try a safe lamp like Bel-Air that emits only pure oxygen. Call Muffet Villena, tel. 0917-8462924.

Go on vacation. It's never too late. You don't have to go far for a change of scenery. And if you can't leave the city, try checking into a hotel. Most have summer packages worth looking into, like the Shangri-La, Westin, Mandarin and Century. Better yet, be close to nature. A forest or seashore can definitely recharge your spirit. Subic is just a few hours away which offers both natural wonders. Summer deals can still be had. Try Subic International Hotel, which even offers a shuttle service from Makati. Call 243-2222 to 33.

Slow down. Practice breathing with peaceful intentions. Try this exercise.

The lamp within

There is a lamp inside everyone. But you have to find out where you put it. Is it in your heart, mind or solar plexus? Close your eyes. Sit in a dark room. Listen to the silence inside and outside of you. Now ask yourself where the lamp is. Remember, it is dark and you need to light it. In your mind's eye, a vision will present itself and you will know where your lamp is. Now turn it on. Say, "I am in control of my emotions and thoughts. I choose to switch them on or off just like a lamp." You need to relax now, so turn it off. Inhale, exhale. Smile. Open your eyes.

Sleepytime nightcap

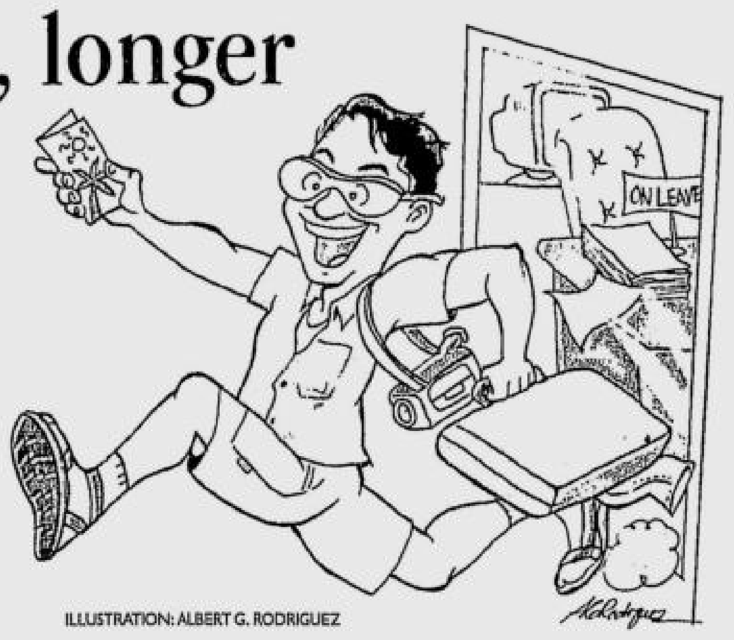
½ banana
1 tsp honey
1-½ c warm non-fat milk

Blend all ingredients until frothy. Drink the concoction 30 minutes before bedtime.

Life is too short so don't let pressures and adversities affect you. Take a break!

Love and light!

E-mail the author at coryquirino_fy@yahoo.com



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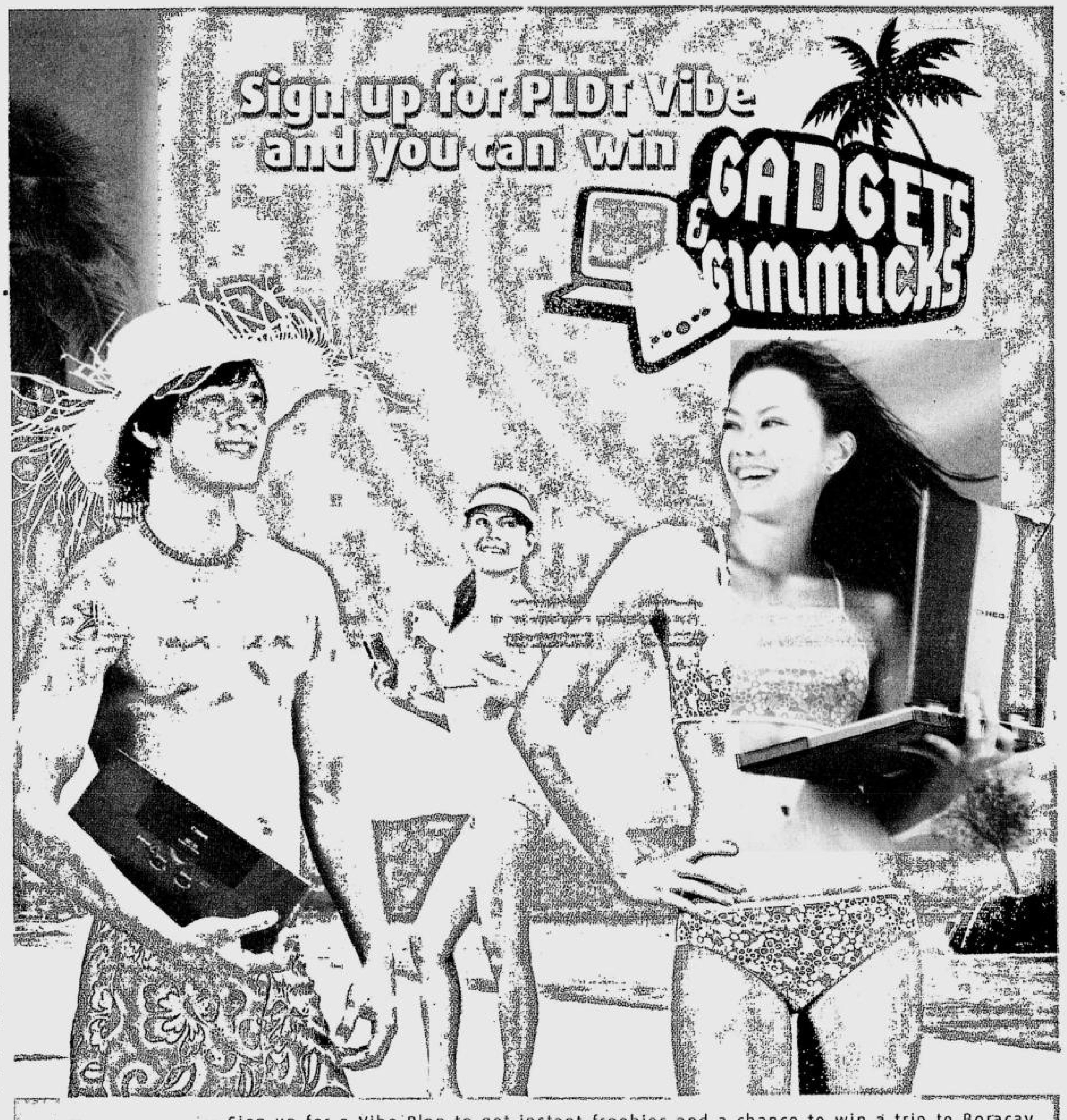

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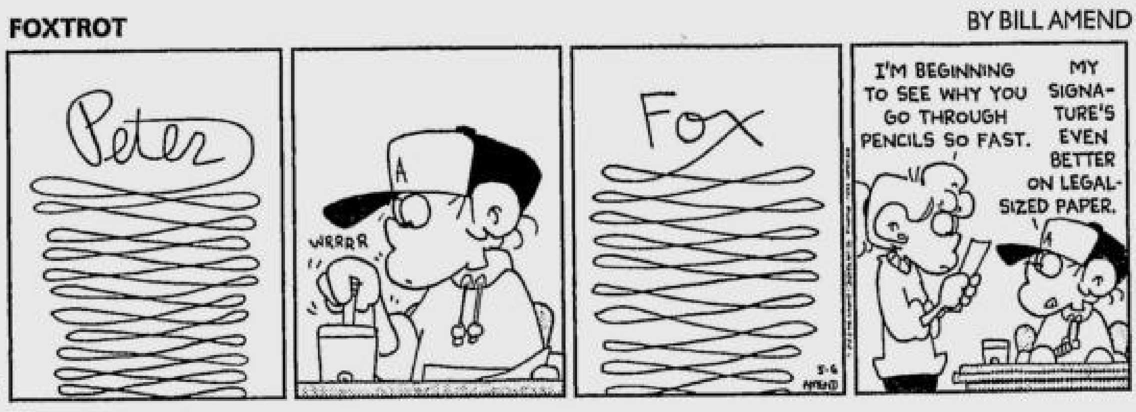
5. Only entries received until May 30, 2003, 7:00pm are qualified to join.
6. Raffle entries will be drawn electronically. Draw will be held in PLDT's Main Office in Ramon Cojuangco Bldg., Dela Rosa corner Makati Avenue, Makati City in the presence of a DTI representative.
7. There will be five weekly draws and a grand draw scheduled as follow:

April 28 (Monday)	1st weekly draw
May 5 (Monday)	2nd weekly draw
May 12 (Monday)	3rd weekly draw
May 19 (Monday)	4th weekly draw
May 26 (Monday)	5th weekly draw
May 31 (Saturday)	Grand Draw

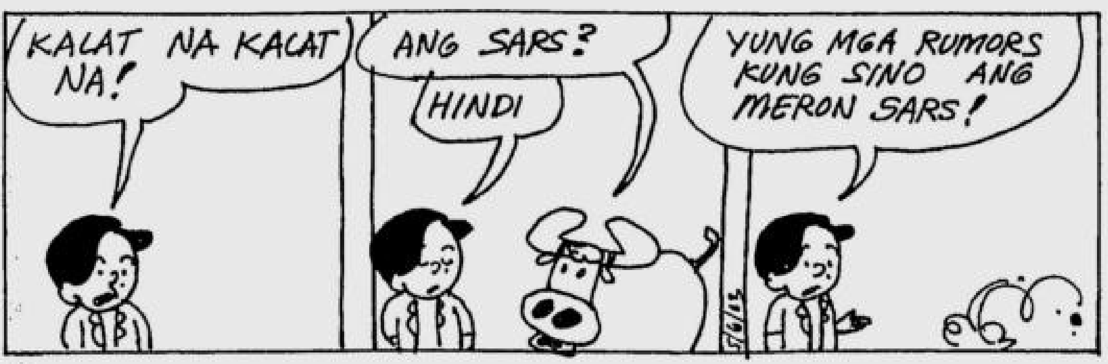
8. Non-winning entries per draw still qualify for the succeeding weekly draws and grand draw.
9. An applicant can only win once in a draw. If a name wins more than once, he gets the bigger prize.
10. Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash.
11. All prizes are tax free.
12. GMA winners may claim their prize from PLDT's Marketing Services at the 5th floor of Ramon Cojuangco Bldg. Dela Rosa corner Makati Avenue, Makati City. To claim the prizes, they must present valid ID and notification letter. For provincial winners, PLDT will send their respective prizes to their address via courier.
13. Gift certificates are valid for one (1) year from date of issuance.
14. Redemption period for the prizes will be 60 days from notification.
15. Prizes not claimed after 60 days will be forfeited.

See flyers and posters for more details. Per DTI-NCR permit • 1613 series of 2003

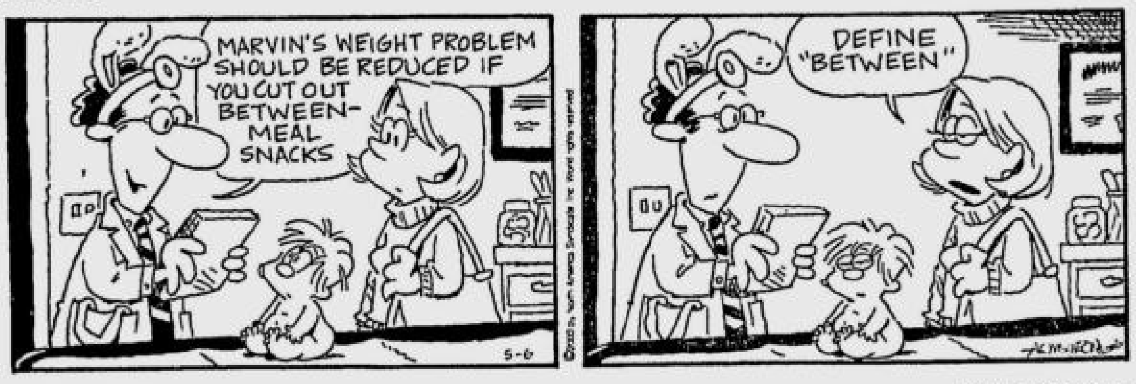
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


Peter
WRRRR
Fox
I'M BEGINNING TO SEE WHY YOU GO THROUGH PENCILS SO FAST.
MY SIGNATURE'S EVEN BETTER ON LEGAL-SIZED PAPER.
5-6

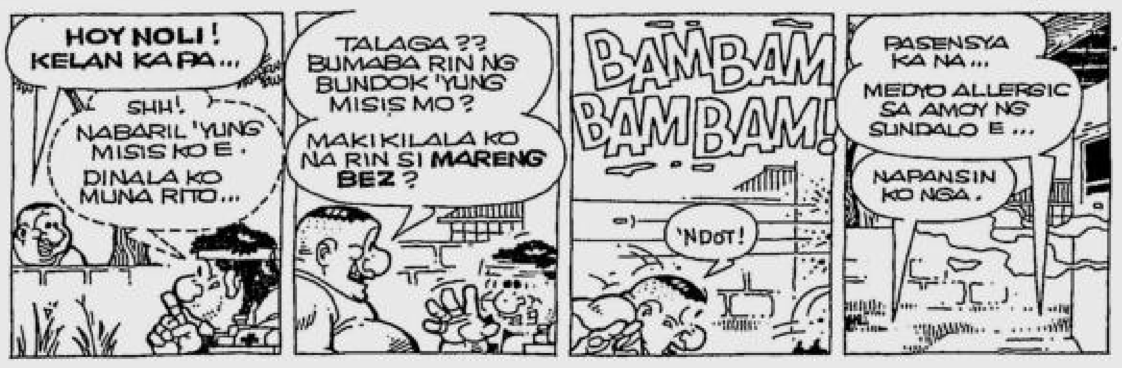
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


KALAT NA KALAT NA!
ANG SARS?
HINDI
YUNG MGA RUMORS KUNG SINO ANG MERON SARS!

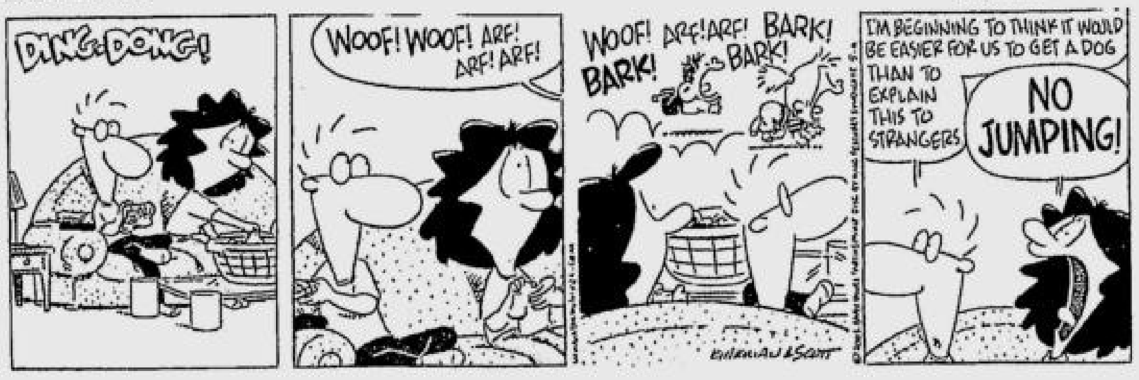
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MARVIN'S WEIGHT PROBLEM SHOULD BE REDUCED IF YOU CUT OUT BETWEEN-MEAL SNACKS
DEFINE "BETWEEN"
5-6

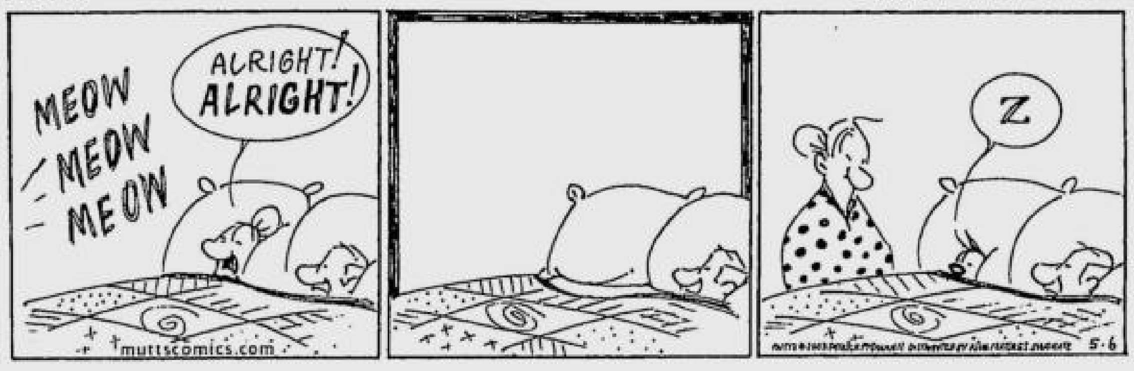
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


HOY NOLI! KELAN KA PA...
SHH!. NABARIL 'YUNG MISIS KO E. DINALA KO MUNA RITO...
TALAGA?? BUMABA RIN NG BUNDOK 'YUNG MISIS MO?
MAKIKILALA KO NA RIN SI MARENG BEZ?
BAMBAM BAMBAM!
'NDOT!
PASENSYA KA NA... MEDYO ALLERGIC SA AMOY NG SUNDALO E...
NAPANSIN KO NGA.

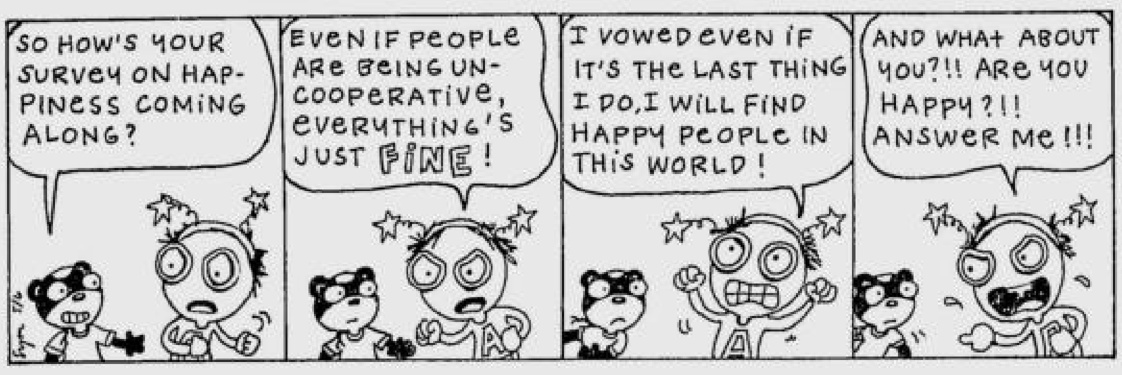
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


DING-DONG!
WOOF! WOOF! ARF! ARF! ARF!
WOOF! BARK! ARF! ARF! BARK! BARK!
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR US TO GET A DOG THAN TO EXPLAIN THIS TO STRANGERS
NO JUMPING!

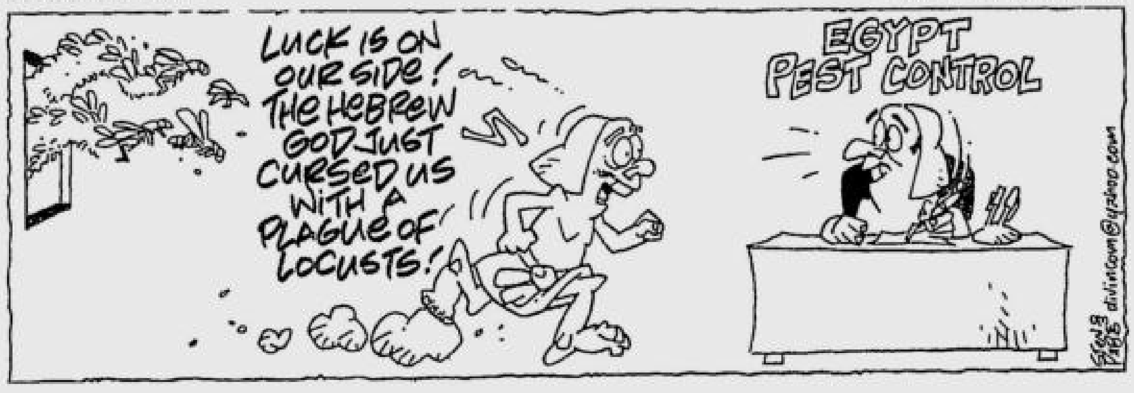
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MEOW MEOW MEOW
ALRIGHT! ALRIGHT!
Z
muttscomics.com
5-6

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SO HOW'S YOUR SURVEY ON HAPPINESS COMING ALONG?
EVEN IF PEOPLE ARE BEING UNCOOPERATIVE, EVERYTHING'S JUST FINE!
I VOWED EVEN IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO, I WILL FIND HAPPY PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD!
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?!! ARE YOU HAPPY?!! ANSWER ME!!!

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


LUCK IS ON OUR SIDE! THE HEBREW GOD JUST CURSED US WITH A PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS!
EGYPT PEST CONTROL
divinicom@yahoo.com

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a natural dignity about you. This, combined with your devotion to any cause dear to your heart, makes others respect you. You have a keen appreciation of nature, music and beautiful things. This year can be one of the most fortunate years of your life. Your cherished dreams can come true.
Birthdate of: Amy Heckerling, director; Johnny Unitas, football quarterback; Eva Perón, actress/dictator's wife.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel intense about things today, particularly philosophical, political and religious issues. Matters connected with the media, foreign countries and higher education concern you now.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You want to use the resources of others to make improvements. If you can get a loan or have the use of someone's property or belongings, you know you can do something worthwhile.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You need to rest today. You want to enjoy yourself talking to others. (New relationships that start now will be intense and memorable.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Others look at you with admiration because you can make reforms or improvements to your environment. Your mechanical and practical know-how brings you praise.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You feel strong affection for someone from a different background than you. You see now that we are all more alike than not.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Someone is willing to give you something so you can make improvements at home or to your private life. It could be money, assistance, encouragement or the tools to get the job done.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Something happens today that reveals the subtext of your relationship with someone. You see now, in a profound way, how much this person means to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might want to do something artistic at work or make your surroundings more attractive. If you're asked to do something with design or layout, say "yes"!

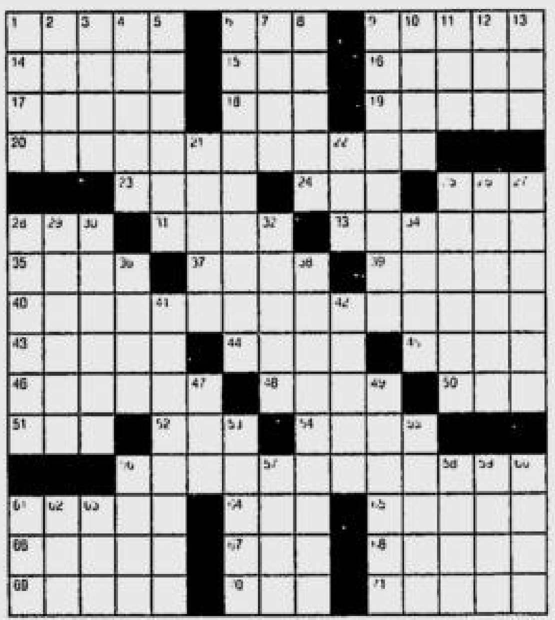
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): New love could begin today. At the very least, minor flirtations bring a smile to your lips and a spring to your step. (No one is ever too old to appreciate being admired.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): The changes you make at home today will be changes for the better. Discussions with family members can smooth over troubled waters. Make the most of this opportunity.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Discussions with friends are so powerful that someone (it could be you) feels changed by what is said. You are drawn to somebody's words as if by a magical power.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might buy something gorgeous that causes others to notice you now. Alternatively, you can come up with a bright idea that takes you in a completely new direction.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Josiah Breward
Scranton, PA

5/6/03

ACROSS
1 Reads a bar code
6 NASA outpost
9 Piercing pains
14 "A Delicate Balance" playwright
15 Utmost
16 Rate
17 Soothsayers
18 Oolong or Earl Grey
19 Select few
20 Hang on!
23 Burn a bit
24 Henpeck
25 Opening letters
28 Skill
31 Allen and Robbins
33 Actress Fawcett
35 Nursing a grudge
37 Sharp
39 Sierra __
40 Hang on!
43 Hippodrome
44 Pleasure journey
45 Small bills
46 Called back
48 Jersey hoopsters
50 Parched
51 "__ Doubtfire"
52 Distress letters
54 Sandra and Ruby
56 Hang on!
61 Sierra Nevada lake
64 Prevaricate
65 Shinbone
66 Left bed
67 Promos
68 Poet Dickinson
69 Board
70 You betcha!
71 Zigzag turns

DOWN
1 Pageant accessory
2 Asp victim, briefly
3 Son of Adam
4 Geeks
5 Sonnet ending
6 Weave together
7 Ladder part
8 Socialist artist Ben
9 Control freak
10 "The __ of Genji"
11 Boxing great
12 However
13 Bishopric
21 Japanese verse form
22 Big galoot
25 Nearby
26 Good-humored ridicule
27 Of poor quality
28 Teeming
29 Lion, at times
30 Attempters
32 Become permanent
34 Gambling mecca
36 Volcano near Messina
38 Nudity
41 "Skittle Players" painter
42 Doled (out)
47 Sticky stuff
49 Bench with a back
53 Awkward
55 Leveling wedges
56 Nothing to write home about
57 Adjutant
58 Sacred bird of Egypt
59 River of Egypt
60 Kyser and Medford
61 Earmark
62 Exist
63 Feverish

Monday's Puzzle Solved

C	O	I	N	■	S	T	U	B	■	F	L	A	T	S
O	N	T	C	■	T	U	N	A	■	L	O	R	R	E
M	E	A	T	■	O	B	I	T	■	A	G	N	E	W
B	A	L	A	N	C	E	T	H	E	B	O	O	K	S
■	■	■	W	O	K	S	■	R	I	B	S	■	■	■
R	A	M	O	N	S	■	B	O	D	Y	■	D	I	M
A	D	O	R	E	■	C	U	B	E	■	P	I	N	E
S	H	O	R	T	O	R	D	E	R	C	O	O	K	S
T	O	R	Y	■	P	U	G	S	■	L	O	D	E	S
A	C	E	■	V	A	S	E	■	C	E	L	E	R	Y
■	■	■	P	A	R	T	■	P	A	A	R	■	■	■
S	M	A	L	L	T	I	M	E	C	R	O	O	K	S
P	E	N	A	L	■	E	A	C	H	■	O	B	I	E
A	R	T	I	E	■	S	L	O	E	■	M	O	L	E
N	E	E	D	Y	■	T	E	S	S	■	S	E	T	S

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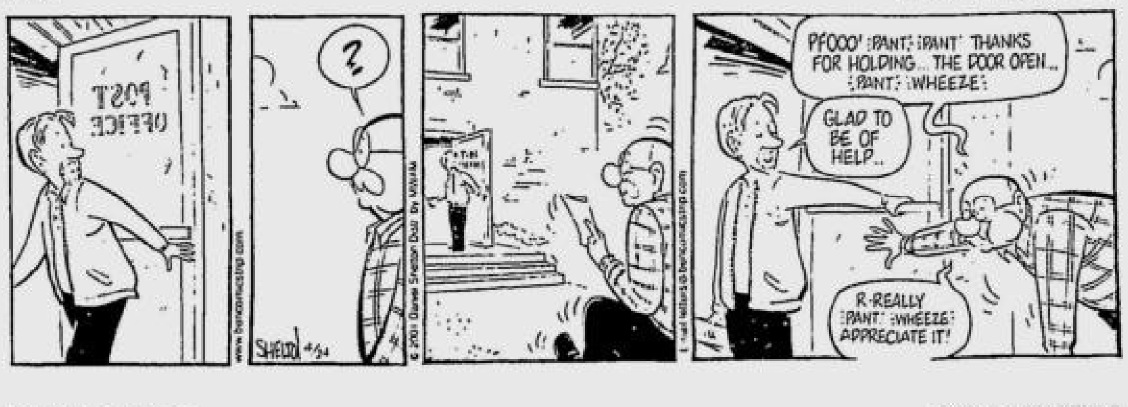
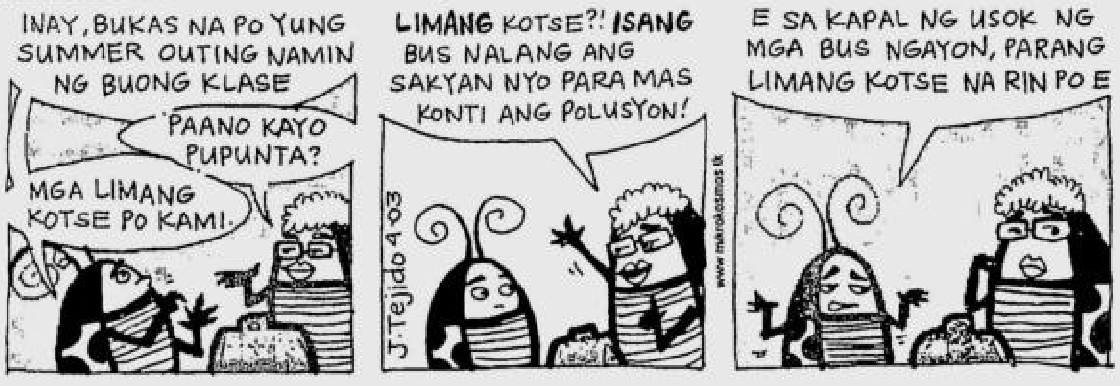
5/6/03

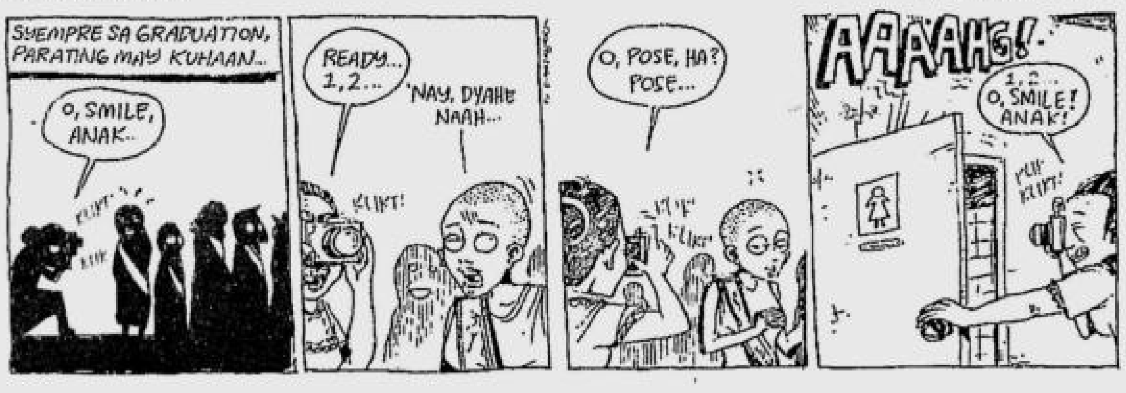
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


POST OFFICE
?
PFOOO! :PANT: :PANT: THANKS FOR HOLDING... THE DOOR OPEN... :PANT: :WHEEZE:
GLAD TO BE OF HELP...
R-REALLY :PANT: :WHEEZE: APPRECIATE IT!

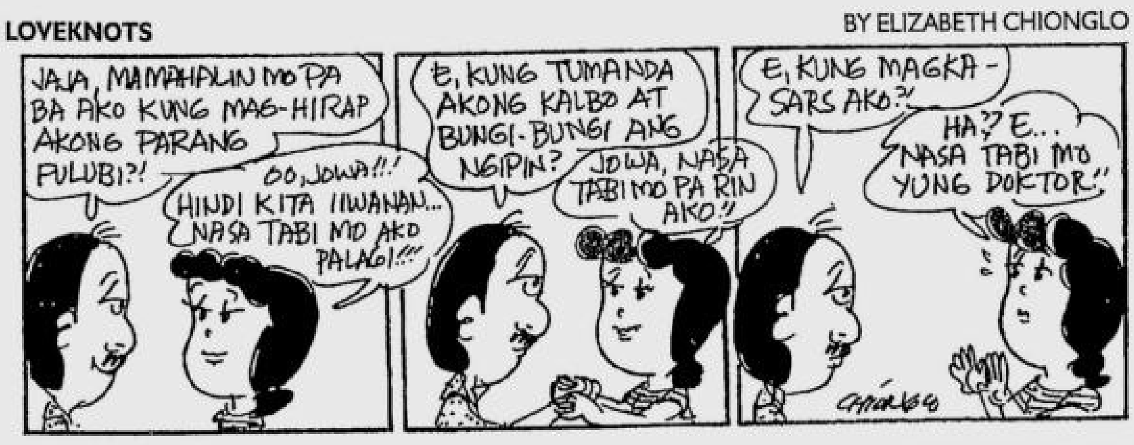
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


INAY, BUKAS NA PO YUNG SUMMER OUTING NAMIN NG BUONG KLASE
PAANO KAYO PUPUNTA?
MGA LIMANG KOTSE PO KAMI.
LIMANG KOTSE?! ISANG BUS NALANG ANG SAKYAN NYO PARA MAS KONTI ANG POLUSYON!
J. Tejido 4 03
E SA KAPAL NG USOK NG MGA BUS NGAYON, PARANG LIMANG KOTSE NA RIN PO E

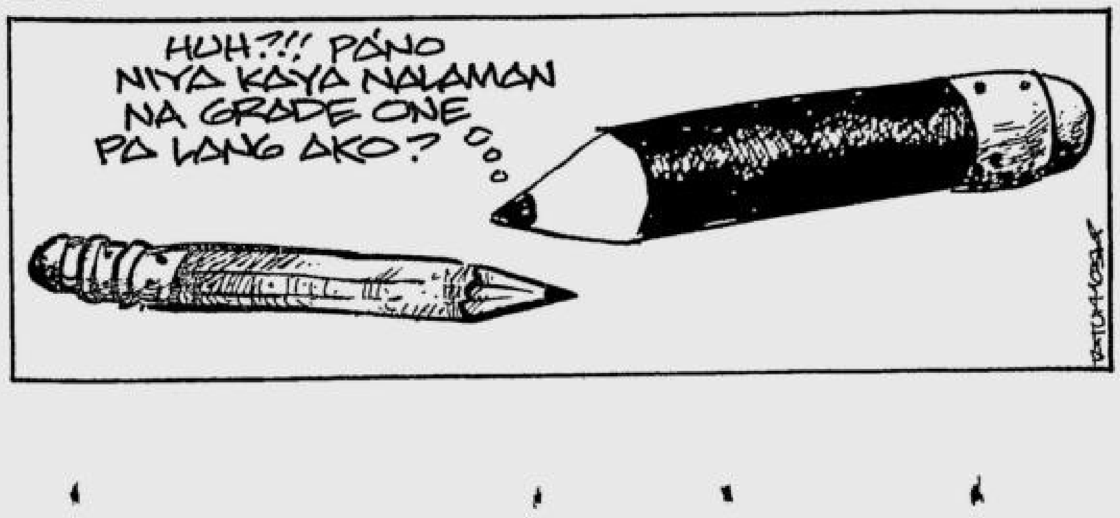
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


SYEMPRE SA GRADUATION, PARATING MAY KUHAAN...
O, SMILE, ANAK..
READY... 1, 2...
'NAY, DYAHE NAAH...
KLIK!
O, POSE, HA? POSE...
AAAAHG!
1, 2... O, SMILE! ANAK!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, MAMAHALIN MO PA BA AKO KUNG MAG-HIRAP AKONG PARANG PULUBI?!
OO, JOWA!!! HINDI KITA IIWANAN... NASA TABI MO AKO PALAGI!!!
E, KUNG TUMANDA AKONG KALBO AT BUNGI-BUNGI ANG NGIPIN?
JOWA, NASA TABI MO PA RIN AKO!!
E, KUNG MAGKA-SARS AKO?!
HA?! E... NASA TABI MO YUNG DOKTOR!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HUH?!! PÁNO NIYA KAYA NALAMAN NA GRADE ONE PA LANG AKO?

RP's water supply threatened by loss of forests

From page D4

gions.

"Frontier Forests" adds, "Global consumption of industrial wood products is expected to jump by more than 50 percent by 2010."

The doubling of the world's population led to the clearing of forests to grow food or for new settlements. It also raised demand for timber, paper, fuel wood and other forest products.

Bad economic policies, short-sighted political decisions and corruption and illegal trade have made governments just as guilty as ordinary people, mired in poverty and landlessness, in the destruction of the forests. According to the report, "economists and policy-makers often overlook the costs of losing frontier forest.

"Such costs may come in the form of soil erosion, the loss of water for agriculture and the release of carbon into the atmosphere."

Reaping the profits

The report, in a sharp rebuke of business and government, said, "[Bad] economic decisions are common because the costs of destruction are not felt or paid by those doing the damage. Frequently, governments and industry reap the profits while frontier peoples receive only a sliver of the benefits but bear the environmental brunt of forest mismanagement."

It added that frontier forests were often sacrificed for short-term political gain. In some developing countries, the governments' solution to poverty was to move millions of people to the frontiers. The move only provides a temporary fix to the problem of poverty but can permanently destroy the valuable forests.

Despite the damage already wrought on the finite resource, destruction continues. Commercial logging, according to the report, "poses by far the greatest danger to frontier forests" affecting some 70 percent of the endangered frontiers but energy development, mining and new infrastructure collectively come a close second, threatening some 40 percent.

Land clearing for agriculture, excessive vegetation removal, overhunting, forest conversion (from tree plantations to golf courses and resorts), emissions even from far-off factories, introduction of new species of both flora and fauna and many more all make their adverse and indelible marks on frontier areas.

Greater peril

Urbanites may feel that the destruction of the forests has nothing to do with them but the killer floods in Ormoc City and the ever worsening flooding in Metro Manila and heretofore flood-proof places say otherwise. But what should be of even greater concern to them and everyone else is the decreasing water supply. Already threatened by pollution, the country's water resource is in even greater peril if the forests disappear completely.

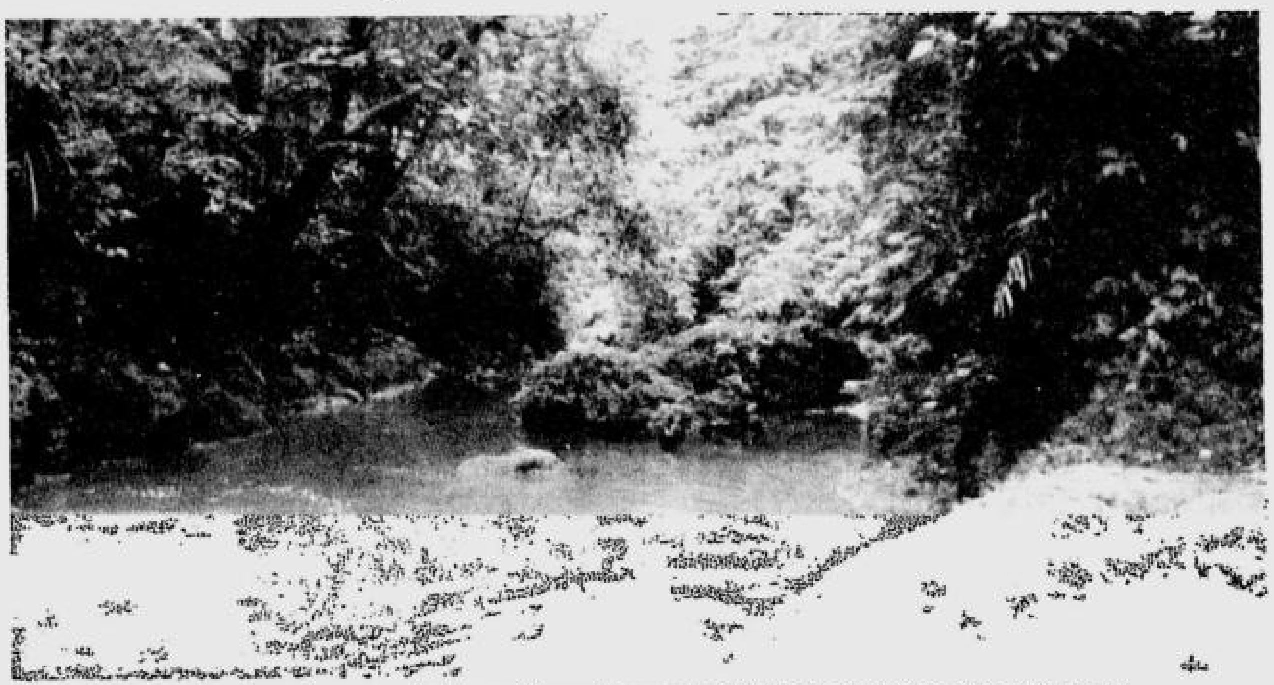
In fact, as forests—holders of the world's water reserves—retreat, the precious element crucial to the survival of all living things will likewise decrease. It was suggested that the United States waged war against Iraq primarily for its oil deposits but oil is only necessary for comfort and convenience and only of certain sections of the global population at that.

Water, on the other hand, is necessary for the very survival of every living creature, to ensure that life continues on this planet. And experts have warned that future wars may be fought over this resource as countries find themselves running short or even out of water. Although fighting over water may seem more reasonable and easier to understand than waging war over oil, that does not, of course, make it more acceptable.

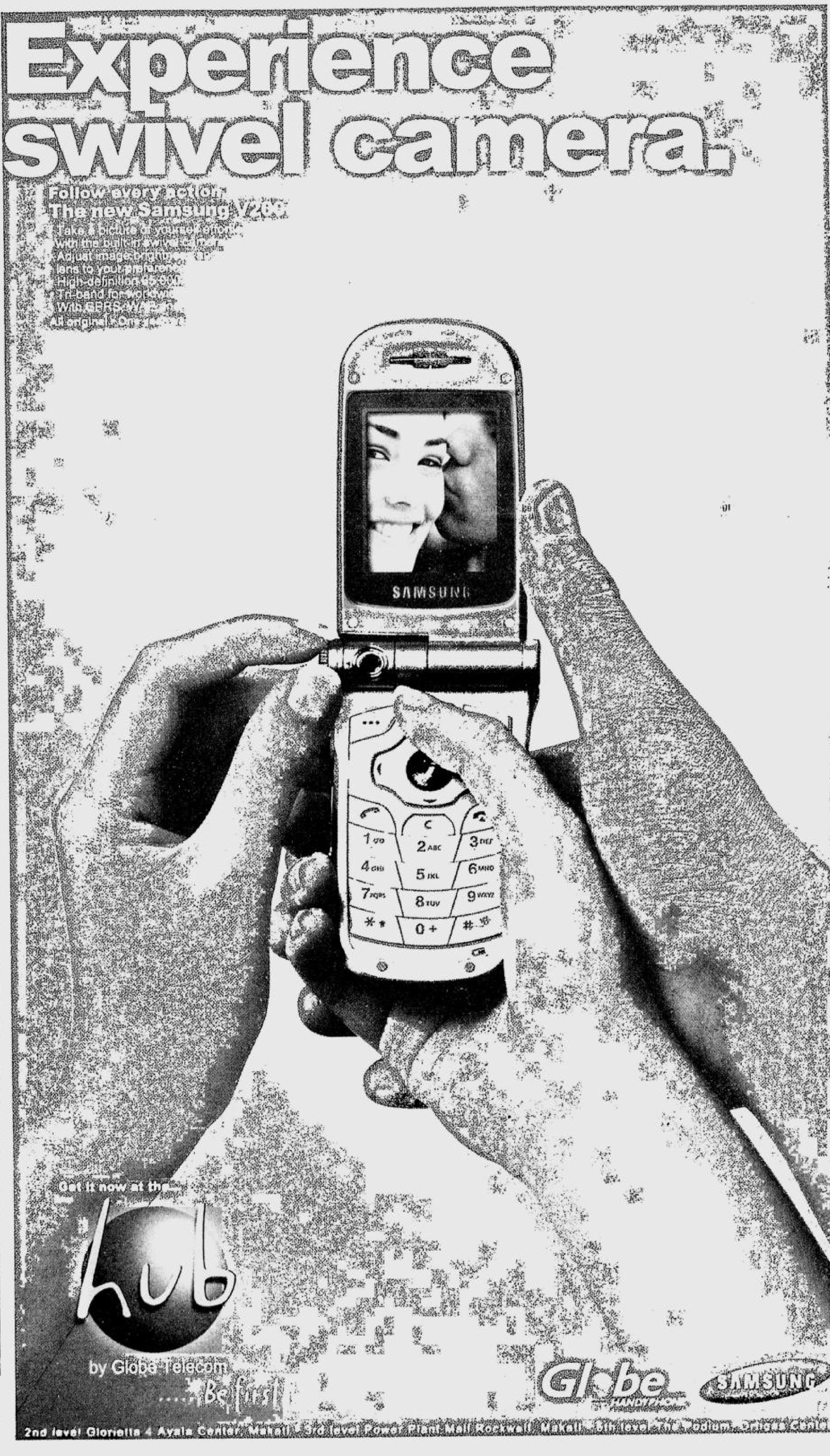
This year, the United Nations calls attention to this potentially explosive issue by declaring 2003 the International Year of Freshwater. Environment Day in June will revolve around the theme "Water for Life."

Joyce Kilmer said "only God can make a tree" but humans, for their own survival, could make sure that His creations did not disappear completely, starting with the forests.

E-mail the author at lbolido@hotmail.com



LUSH vegetation has kept the water in this pool formed by a waterfall in Bohol province still crystal clear.


Experience swivel camera.
Follow every action
The new Samsung V200
SAMSUNG
Get it now at the
hub
by Globe Telecom
....Be first
Globe
SAMSUNG
2nd level Glorietta 4 Ayala Center, Makati • 3rd level Power Plant Mall Rockwell, Makati • 5th level The Podium, Ortigas Center

GADJA Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, has a sandalwood propagation project that provides livelihood to keep local people from destroying the forests.

RP's water supply threatened by loss of forests

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido

OVERPOPULATION, poverty, greed and wrong government policies are among the causes of the destruction of forests.

NELSON Grapiza, a woodcarver and furniture maker in Cagayan, does not have to be told the country's forests are in big trouble. He is beginning to feel the increasing shortage of the narra, the Philippine national tree and one of the hardwoods craftsmen like him like to work with.

Grapiza said he now had to work increasingly with gmelina, not as tough and as big as the narra. But the gmelina, often propagated in agro-forest plantations, can be harvested in just a few years—less than eight according to some—while the narra reaches its full potential only after 20 years or so.

Grapiza said, while it would require three gmelina trees to make one round table, only one mature narra would be needed for the same item. The price difference speaks even more eloquently—a narra dining set (one round table and four chairs) sells for P14,000 while the gmelina version can be had for P4,000, according to Grapiza.

Growing shortages in narra, mahogany (although planted almost all over the country, the method of propagation is not conducive to its achieving its full potential as it is being grown more like an ornamental tree, with saplings separated by just a few feet) and other Philippine hardwoods, as well as other forest products, have long signaled that the country's forests are in serious crisis. Many rattan furniture makers, for instance, are going farther and farther afield, even overseas, to get their raw materials or have even folded up for lack of anything to work with.

The latest to proclaim just how sick the country's forests are is President Macapagal-Arroyo. Urging Filipinos to conserve the Philippines' forests in her Earth Day message, the President was quoted as saying that "nearly 90 percent of our watershed reservations are already considered degraded and 18 of the 85 critical watersheds are in urgent need of immediate rehabilitation."

Dubious distinction

The Philippine forest situation may actually be direr than those figures suggest. In the 1997 report "The Last Frontier Forests" prepared by Dirk Bryant, Daniel Nielsen and Laura Tangley, the Philippines adds to its dubious distinctions by being among the 70 or so countries that "have lost all of their frontier forests" and where reforestation should be a priority.

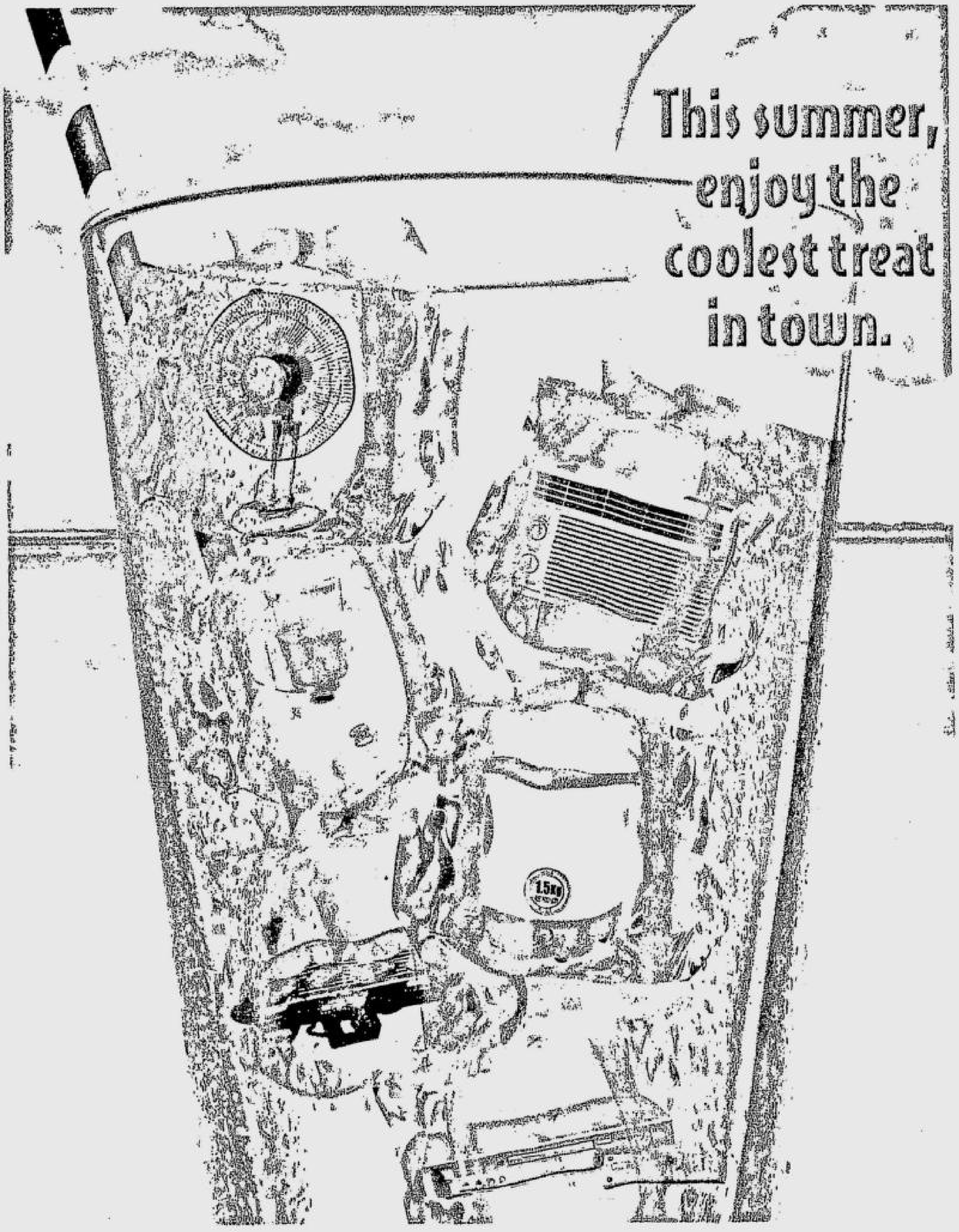
A joint project of the World Resources Institute, World Conservation Monitoring Center and the World Wildlife Fund, the report defines frontier forests as "the world's remaining large intact natural forest ecosystems," relatively undisturbed with their biodiversity maintained and protected, including viable populations for a wide range of species of flora and fauna.

The loss of the vital natural resource, crucial to the survival, comfort and convenience of humankind, is rooted precisely on people's need to ensure all those things but without regard for the consequences of their mindless actions. Consumption and growing economies have raised demands for certain forest products. The report said between 1961 and 1994, demand for paper grew by 86 percent globally and 350 in developing countries, although the industrialized world still used more than 10 times as much paper per person as the poorer re-

RP'S/ D3

The Philippines is among the countries that 'have lost all of their frontier forests'

NATURAL streams contribute to water supplies.


This summer, enjoy the coolest treat in town.
1.5kg

Get Rewards for FEWER points and LESS cash thru Super Offer only with the world's local bank.

*Redeem your Rewards on **May 10-11 & May 17-18, 2003.***

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All over the world, HSBC gives an exclusive treat to its credit cardholders - an easier way to get their rewards. In the Philippines, we do the same with Super Offer.

Now, get the choicest Rewards for FEWER points and LESS cash! From flat TV's to DVD players, airconditioners, portable washing machines and more!

Keep using your credit card from HSBC to pile up your points. Then use those points to redeem your Rewards on the following **Super Offer weekends: May 10 - 11 & May 17 - 18, 2003.** For more details, get your Super Offer Rewards catalog at any HSBC or HSBC Savings branch or call 878-7878. You can also log-on at www.hsbc.com.ph.

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